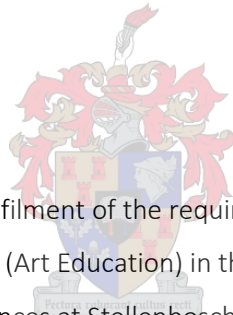


# Investigating transformation and decolonization at an institutional galley in the Western Cape

Joshua McLean



A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Visual Arts (Art Education) in the Faculty of Arts and Social  
Sciences at Stellenbosch University

Supervisor: Prof. E Costandius

December 2021

## Declaration

By submitting this dissertation electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third-party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in-part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

December 2021

Copyright © 2021 Stellenbosch University

All rights reserved.

## Abstract

During the final years of my undergraduate program, the student protests of #FeesMustFall had swept the country. The topic of decolonization came to the fore at many campuses in South Africa. From the period of the student protests, the gallery that I am investigating was more frequently hosting events and doing various shows around the topic of decolonization. My proximity and experience of these events led to me question and then, research how an institutional gallery could be structured or should exist in the framework of decoloniality. In this research I will describe my experience and thoughts as a native of the Western Cape, reflecting on that time, but also admitting that these thoughts were influenced by many conversations with fellow students and the public. I am writing a theoretical thesis where I will reflect on my experience of various exhibitions and events at a gallery in the Western Cape during 2015-2016. Through the description of these events, I will investigate theoretical perspectives related to socio-semiotic space, transformation, and decolonization to evaluate and better understand how the cultural production of art may foster a decolonized space. It is important to say that I do not know what the ultimate synthesis of decolonization may entail but can only hope to present an overview of my theoretical investigations. I embarked on this research practice to understand how post-colonial theory in a post-colonial city affects art/gallery/citizen education in the region of Stellenbosch.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the following persons:

- My parents, my peers, and lecturers through the years.
- Special thanks to Terri Dennis for her support and motivation.
- Most of all I would like to thank my supervisor, Prof. Elmarie Costandius – thank you for your patience, your guidance, encouragement during this degree, and your unyielding commitment to education.

## Table of Contents

Declaration .....	i
Abstract .....	ii
Acknowledgements .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
 CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .....	 1
1.1 Background .....	1
1.2 Problem statement, research questions, aims, and objectives .....	4
 CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES	
2.1 Introduction .....	7
2.2 Understanding the concept of 'landscape' .....	7
2.3 Semiotic landscape .....	10
2.4 Landscaping and cognitive landscapes .....	11
2.5 Henri Lefebvre and the production space	
2.5.1 Production of space.....	12
2.5.2 Social space is a social product.....	17
2.5.3 Consequences of the social production of social space.....	18
2.6 Conclusion .....	20

## CHAPTER 3 CONTEXTUALISING THE STUDY

3.1 Introduction.....	21
3.1.1 Education during colonial rule and apartheid.....	21
3.1.2 Apartheid in South Africa: space and education.....	24
3.1.3 Stellenbosch: a segregated space.....	25
3.1.3.1 Forced removals: the 1950s Group Areas Act.....	27
3.1.3.2 The formation of Kayamandi: the Native Areas Act.....	28
3.1.3.3 Conclusion.....	29
3.2 Decoloniality and Decolonisation: Mbembe.....	31
3.3 Gallery University Stellenbosch.....	36
3.4 The gallery as an archive.....	39
3.5 Strategies for Decoloniality in Education.....	41
3.6 Frameworks of Decoloniality/Decolonisation.....	45
3.7 Conclusion.....	47

## CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction.....	49
4.2 Discourse analysis.....	49
4.3 Data collection.....	49
4.4 Ethical considerations.....	50

## CHAPTER 5: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

5.1 Introduction.....	51
5.2 Description of exhibitions that took place at GUS.....	51
5.2.1 1 Battleground - Charles Bell's Drawings of the War of the Axe, 6 April 2016.....	51
5.2.3 Madosini and Found at Sea Live – 3 August 2017.....	53
5.2.2 African Rhythms – 21 September 2017.....	55
5.2. 4 Press/release group exhibition. 3-27 October 2017.....	56
5.3 Themes that emerged from the exhibitions. ....	58

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Introduction.....	68
6.2 Conclusions drawn from the findings and implications.....	68
6.3 Contribution to the field of research.....	71
6.4 Further research and critique of the research.....	71
6.5 Concluding remarks.....	72

References .....	73
------------------	----

### List of figures:

Figure 1: Google Maps (2021) Stellenbosch Area and GUS Gallery, scale N/A. Available from:  
<https://www.google.co.za/maps/@-33.9288239,18.8595626,14.66z> [Accessed 2021 September]

Figure 2: *Dubow, N (1969) in Oosthuysend, O.O [ed]. 1969. Die Universiteit se Kunsrnuseum. Matieland, 1969. No1. April 1969*



## Chapter 1. Introduction to the research

In chapter 1, I will provide the background as to why this research topic was chosen. I will then continue to describe the problem statement, aim and objectives, and research question.

### 1.1 Background

During the *Rhodes Must Fall* (and its various spin-offs), the topic of decolonization came to the fore at many campuses in South Africa. Student gatherings were attended in large numbers, and it was an interesting time to be a student: one which generated conversations in decolonization through a variety of literature, media, art, events, and spaces. The controversy, media attention and power struggles of the *Rhodes Must Fall* movement paid special attention to the social responsibilities of tertiary education institutions. Student movements sought to accelerate the transformation process and take some of the responsibility upon themselves. Decolonization is by no means a new concept, the large body of African theory that preceded the protests served as ideological fuel for the journey that would unfold.

Campuses across the country were sympathetic to the protestors at the UCT campus and were inspired (or perhaps co-ordinated) to follow suit. Students on numerous campuses protested for the removal of student fees, a more inclusive language policy for instruction inside classrooms, the destruction or removal of monuments of the colonial leaders, better inclusion, building a more democratic visual culture of South African heritage, and other topics. I would argue that each point held a different degree of significance on different campuses, but there was consensus on certain topics. One such was student fees. Space was another concern, questions of how it portrayed selective histories and isolated groups based on racial status became important. Spaces were also a physical concern.

Students used whatever spaces they could to mobilize other students, organize their movement in meetings and vocalize their concerns to digital audiences. It happened quickly. The reception of these events was varied within the organizations of the University campuses and each university when compared to others presented individual dynamics.

At the time, I was a student at Stellenbosch University. The removal of the Rhodes Statue generated national attention triggering a rapid spurt of engagement with postcolonial theory, radical action,

and public space. Organized students relied on various methods to communicate their concerns to the public. The theme of public space was something that stood out for me. Debates and speeches were held in public spaces. Students took their concerns to the streets, to some degree, took debates out of boardrooms and offices. One such debate was about public space, who gets to control public space. The role of educational structures as public spaces. The meaning of objects in physical space, like the statue of Rhodes.

The technological spread of information in the student movement was also an interesting development to consider. The initial event that set off Rhodes Must Fall manifested as a sort of political spectacle that was readily consumed and spread in the digital space. This was subsequently spread by newspapers and other social platforms. While the initial topic of concern was regarding the Rhodes statue, different issues were being brought to light as the momentum of the initial event spread. Students in other campuses were provoked to engage the ideas of space and their demands from their universities. Eventually, in various ways and on different platforms we were to navigate their demands on space in general. What starts as someone throwing poo at a statue resulted in debates about public space across the country. It was a radical act, that spurred other radical acts at other universities. It became spectacular as the media picked up the story and videos spread through cell phones. When students collectively organized themselves; t-shirts were printed, videos of meetings were taken, logos and websites were designed, documentaries were shared on YouTube. The cultural production around the movement gave it a sort of legitimacy. How the initial moment of *Rhodes Must Fall* fragmented into a series of other concerns and organizations is something that would be interesting to explore further. What was particularly interesting is how the debate between protestors and the universities reproduced itself. It started the concern of statues but reproduced differently in the context of other spaces. These reproductions also had different names, *Rhodes Must Fall* manifested in #FEESMUSTFALL and so on.

At Stellenbosch University, the language policy became a major point of contention that lingered. There are many monuments in Stellenbosch which celebrate colonialism and apartheid, when the student demands were met with the institutional production of space the major point of contention didn't concern actual physical space, but the theoretical underpinning of policy operating on space. The language policy and how it affected the access-to-space became the talking point of the *OpenStellenbosch* movement. Another thing to consider was that these were new organizations. Unfettered by a charter or political history, they became communities of social experimentation,

spaces of communal production. They needed names, logos websites, and hashtags every time they were reproduced to face contextual challenges. People were willing to provide the labour that went around the task of organization. There were students taking chances on doing, actively attempting as opposed to only planning.

South Africa faces massive inequality and segregation, largely but not demarcated by racial grouping in the aftermath of apartheid. The voice of the colonized people of apartheid was suppressed up until the end of apartheid. The suppression gradually lifted until the ultimate pop in the early 1990s, but until then white supremacy in South Africa administered the development of state and land. Some of Stellenbosch University alumni are former leaders of the apartheid government. Its monuments and heritage sites are dedicated to the former leaders of the colonial past in South Africa. The town and university was the place where the architecture for racial oppression in South Africa was prepared (Fransman 2015, Beale 1998). This kind of involvements is not something easily forgotten.

Since apartheid ended, the University of Stellenbosch has expressed its desire to construct itself as an inclusive and integrated space.

*“A big burden for any education or public institution may lie in the different names associated with its social, political and even financial history as reflected in its building, lectures or boardrooms” (De Waal, 2005).*

But many issues have persisted.

*“Stellenbosch consists of a town centre, reserved for “white” people during Apartheid by the Group Areas Act (1950) surrounded by spatially disconnected and racially segregated suburbs and townships. [...] Legacies of colonialism and apartheid are etched into [the] social dynamics of the town in the way its inhabitants occupy public space – real and imagined boundaries are still constructed according to race and class. (Valley, 2014 cited in Odendaal, 2017: 63)*

The history of Stellenbosch University and the greater town of Stellenbosch is enough to show that it was a foundational settlement of colonial expansion in South Africa. If we consider that the country has become a liberated democracy since 1994, is Stellenbosch officially decolonized by extension? If so, how did decolonization happen in Stellenbosch? If not, how should it happen? What are the means of decolonisation? The form of decolonisation? This issue came up time and time again, and for me, it is clear the means to resolve some of these questions are not clear yet. I considered my role as a student and postgraduate researcher at the university. My faculty and

department and the myriad of identities and influences contained in its occupied space. The privilege of education I have been bestowed, the agency to the regulated use of university resources. When you have these facilities and networks, you have the agency to do more and, I sought to utilize them in understanding and researching these questions. Directly or indirectly, it led me to become involved in the activities of Gallery University Stellenbosch, the institutional gallery of the University's Fine Arts department.

The relationship between Stellenbosch University and its non-white communities have been strained by history. In my opinion, the university is a good case study for the topic of decolonization. But to focus on the entirety of the university is a mighty summit. I chose to focus on the university gallery and art practice, something I have more foundational knowledge in. Yet many questions must be discussed surrounding the institution which also applies to the gallery: Whether the Stellenbosch University is decolonized? Whether the university (gallery) can become decolonized? Where do we draw a definitive opinion on what decolonial practices are? There are various ways a contemporary art gallery can function. Ideas of what to do and how a gallery should function do not always correspond across the public opinion. For example, a profit-centred auctioneers' approach will be at odds with academic emancipatory art education. This is also true for how people perceive art; it tends to differ from person to person. Yoshiara (2008) notes that cultural dissimilarities on what constitutes art affect the viewership of the museum space at the Iziko Museum. How has this reflected in the gallery space of the institution concerned in our spaces and what are the strategies that have become apparent? How do we conceptualize new or better our strategies for art education within the gallery spaces? Within the scope of this thesis, I cannot answer these questions definitively. My research is centred on a theoretical reflection upon the exhibitions and art happenings/events generated around the topic of decoloniality from 2015 to 2016. In doing so I hope to facilitate an analysis of the events concerning relevant literature. I chose this because this was a time when people were particularly mobilized to act around the theoretical underpinnings of decoloniality.

I also consider the research of the gallery as a platform that speaks to greater topics of cultural difference within South African institutional art galleries and education. Numerous spaces are concerned with decolonization, and there are various frameworks in which the topic will render understandings. Therefore, the literature will consist of a hybrid of sources that pertain to the

constructions of space, the historical operations of the space, the current challenges to decolonisation and frameworks for decolonisation.

## **1.2 Problem Statement, research questions, aims and objectives.**

### **1.2.1 Problem Statement**

Decolonization as an academic pursuit has become flexible and far-reaching in its applications and definitions (Tuck & Yang, 2012). My concern lies in how it applies in a local South African context and specifically within gallery spaces. As such I have chosen to reflect on my experiences of attending art exhibitions and participating in exhibitions at an institutional gallery as a model. This is influenced by the question: how do we imagine/conceptualize/strategize/practice/interpret decolonization within an institutional gallery space.

The interest in this research was generated out of the efforts during the time of student protest, to engage with decolonial theory through art and to interact with spaces of (non)belonging. The interest remains because the time sparked very important questions of language, ethnicity, and life after coloniality. From the period of the student protests, a gallery in the Western Cape was more frequently hosting events and doing various shows around the topic of decolonization. My experience and participation in these events led me to question and discuss how an art gallery should be structured or should exist in the framework of decolonial philosophy. What would a decolonial art gallery do? How does a predominantly colonial gallery become decolonial? These questions stood out as the spaces sought at that time to facilitate a conversation around decolonial ideas, yet at the same time served as a branch of a colonially founded institution.

### **1.2.2 Aim of the research**

This research aimed to theoretically investigate how decolonisation could happen for the colonial institution. To unpack the concerns and demands of decolonization. To understand what decolonisation requires for it to reach the decolonised. A large part of the concern with this subject was intimately connected to my experience as a student. I seek to reflect on my interaction with decoloniality through the spaces where I spent time understanding it. The Gallery University Stellenbosch was a place where many conversations were held about decolonization, apartheid history, identity politics. The speed with which everything was happening at the time.

Decisions were decisive and demands were made with extreme urgency. There was much happening in real-time and the time to create, respond and inform yourself of an entire philosophical cannon was very limited. The questions I feature in this thesis are those I still possessed with regards to decolonization in my reflection of *Rhodes Must Fall* affected the shared space of Stellenbosch. This paper's aims are informed by the practice of theoretically reflecting on my lived experience during that time.

### 1.2.3 Research questions and objectives

I will attempt to contextualize and analyse these events to generate a discussion towards answering the main research question: How do we enact a decolonial art practice at an institutional gallery?

The sub-questions will be formulated as follows?

- a) How do we recognize decolonial spaces?
- b) What gallery practice is decolonial?
- c) What are the aims of a decolonial gallery?

The objectives of the research will be linked to the research questions. The resultant study objectives are:

- a) To reflect on how we could enact a decolonial art practice at an institutional gallery.
- b) To reflect on how we define colonial and decolonial spaces.
- c) To reflect on what gallery practice is decolonial.
- d) To reflect on what the aims of a decolonial gallery are.

In the next section, the theoretical perspectives that underpin this research will be discussed.

## Chapter 2. Theoretical perspectives

### Section 1:

#### 2.1 Introduction

To observe the role of institutions and their surrounding, I intend to launch into an investigation of space. The construction of space in post-colonial South Africa is an intricate process to unpack. Colonial and apartheid configurations of space during the control of South Africa created geographically segregated communities. However, the persistence of the racial division extends beyond the realms of the geographical. This chapter aims to launch a small theoretical investigation into the formation of spatial power relations.

To understand the relationship between space, and its more metaphysical descriptions and implications, I will start by analysing the concept of landscape and how it has been impacted by the humanistic turn of social geography. The chapter continues by looking at social descriptions of space. Finally, the work Henri Lefebvre is described as it relates to the social production of space. Lefebvre raises several points about the political qualities of space through representation and questions of knowledge

#### 2.2 Understanding the concept of 'landscape'.

An older use of the concept of the landscape has been the field of cartographers and painters. According to Abrahamson the term landscape can be traced back to the 8<sup>th</sup> century and served to define the physical area of a 'space' and only later in the 17th century was the term utilized to describe Dutch paintings of spatial pastoral scenes (Abrahamson, 1999).

Within the field of mathematics and geographical representation, cartography sought to quantify and document the landscape indivisible means. It became a significant tool for mapping and recording human experience - and a tool for plotting private property. Without it, the sailors of Dutch East Indian Company or the Victorian Trading Company would not have as easily sailed and claimed territory across the globe. The refinement of cartography facilitated the advent of modern capitalism and colonialism (Jaworski & Thurlow 2010: 3).

However, the notion of landscape is not only a tool for cartographers, geographers, and painters. In the field of ecology, the landscape has been a locus of study before its function in cartography, as it is the foundation for all ecological interaction. The notion of the landscape took a humanistic turn through contemporary geography. Jaworski and Thurlow (2010) cite Denis Cosgrove as an important scholar in the field of geography, and they position him as an agent for the humanistic turn in geography. Cosgrove sought to expand on the utilitarian view of landscape within geography and entered an interdisciplinary approach whereby we may gaze and decipher the individual and collective imagination and experience of a landscape. He recognized that our way of understanding and experiencing space was mediated through the visual language contained within it, not only through the physical characteristics of the space (ibid 2010: 4). These questions are more pertinent within the contemporary urban space because of the abundance of visual languages we encounter day-to-day and the multitude of mediums for sharing (cultural) information.

The landscape as defined by Cosgrove is how we perceive our external world, while at the same time, serves as a “visual ideology”. This visual ideology allows us to... “view and interprets space in ways that are contingent on geographical, social, economic, legal, cultural, and emotional circumstances, as well as our practical uses of the physical environment as nature and territory, aesthetic judgements, memory and myth” (Jaworski & Thurlow 2010: 3).

Cosgrove used the example of painting to describe this: “The artist through perspective, establishes the arrangement or composition, and thus the specific time of the events described determines in both senses, the point of view to be taken by the observer and controls through framing the scope of the reality revealed” (ibid, 2010:3). The painter has a subjective understanding of the space. The viewer interprets the painting in their subjective understanding and, without visiting the place, can gain an impression of an idea of said space. The painter creates a narrative about the space they depict. In turn, they produce an artefact that carries a sort of memory of the landscape. This memory, however, is also subjectively interpreted by the viewer. The viewer’s memory of the landscape and space is affected by the lived reality and their depictions but also other people’s depictions of the same space. The combination of these layers gives rise to a visual of space that is constructed, navigated, interpreted, and reproduced.



By asserting that landscapes are subject to visual ideology, it must follow that the various ways of perceiving a landscape are subject to competing “scopic regimes” (Jaworski and Thurlow 2010). The development of modern technology plays a major role in the way we view landscapes through these regimes. For example, John Urry surmises that land as a natural resource for living and farming has been transformed into a commodity of tourism with travel underscoring its scenic qualities. Where paintings once centred the experience on the viewer, photography and video removed this centre and has replaced it with a multiplicity of representation (ibid, 2010: 4).

Technology like Google maps or live streaming now allows for remote exploration of spaces through satellite imaging and web cameras. We can physically access new spaces through high-speed trains and aeroplane voyages across oceans, navigating the landscape faster than ever before. Where paintings were once a glimpse into other spaces, we can now access multiple in an instant – reshaping the significance of traversing landscapes. Daniels and Cosgrove describe the landscape in the technological society as a “flickering text displayed on the word-processor screen whose meaning can be created, extended, altered, elaborated and finally obliterated at the mere flick of a button” (Daniels and Cosgrove cited in Jaworski and Thurlow 2010:5). This also affects how we value the experience of viewing and traversing different kinds of landscapes. Now more than ever the landscapes we venture through and occupy are mediated by a seemingly endless stream of media. These representations of spaces are constantly competing for attention and influence, in a cultural tug-of-war to claim and define the landscape.

A landscape, however, is not only a site of cultural contestation. Rather it has a complex dialectical status, as a physical built environment, a place for human relationships and interaction, and as a site of symbolic signifiers which shape and provide meaning in those contexts (Jaworski and Thurlow 2010). The people who inhabit and labour on the landscape will also inherently define its constitution.

*“The problem of the proper conceptualization of space is resolved through human practice concerning it. In other words, there are no philosophical answers to philosophical questions that arise over the nature of space – the answers lie in human practice. The question ‘what is space?’ is therefore replaced by the question ‘how is it that different human practices*

*create and make use of different conceptualizations of space?” (David Harvey, 2006: 125-126 cited in Jaworski and Thurlow 2010).*

Henri Lefebvre, much like David Henry, also made contributions to the notion of landscape or space as a socially created ideology, and this, in turn, has shaped the study of landscape towards the different ways it is constructed, referenced, and understood. In the current epoch of global wars and migration, visual markers of identity provide various diasporic communities with comfort and a sense of belonging. Noting that the landscape is not merely a physical entity, it is a multiplicity whereby the dwellers’ experience is mediated by sensual and intellectual experience to garnish a sense of home (Jaworski and Thurlow 2010). Furthermore, city spaces today are more heterogeneous. Migration has created spaces where diasporic communities are integrated into local politics and culture. The symbolic, mental, and physical attributes that construct national identity according to the landscapes is termed by Sverkr Sorlin as the articulation of territory. It is constructed through the production of signifiers such as writing, pictures, architecture, art, museum, tourism, etc (Sorlin cited in Jaworski and Thurlow 2010). In the case of diasporic communities, imagery and cuisine are crucial to marking and familiarizing space towards the longing sentiments of home. They transform urban areas through signs, communication and travel networks, restaurants, religious structures, flags, and political institutions – and in so doing claim foreign spaces as their own, or by the very least bridge them to the familiar (Collins and Slembrouck in Jaworski and Thurlow 2010). Language is critical in creating pockets of belonging within spaces, particularly within diasporic communities. We can no longer conceptualize states being defined as only speaking one language rather the constellations of languages and dialects which emerge within their respective territories. Stories, folklore, and religion are of particular importance in accessing and establishing local identities, even in foreign spaces. (Johnston and Modan in Jaworski and Thurlow 2010).

## 2.3 Semiotic Landscape

As many social geographers have noted in the redefinition of the term landscape, we influence our environment to reflect our cultural practices. Tom Hall cited in (Stroud & Jegels,) posits that space, no longer simply an area to be travelled across, “is that through which, and with which, lives take

shape, and that biographies of place and life are intimately interwoven. (Hall in Stroud and Jegels: 2). Berger and Luckman state that “cultural groups transform the natural environment into landscapes using different symbols that bestow different meanings on the same physical objects or conditions. These symbols and meanings are sociocultural phenomena; they are social constructions (Berger & Luckmann cited in Greider & Garkovich 1994)

Ferdinand de Saussure proclaimed, “A science that studies the life of signs within society is possible.... I shall call it semiology (from Greek *semeion*, ‘sign’)” (de Saussure cited in Van Leeuwen 2004). Van Leeuwen goes on to note that, “Social semiotics is not ‘pure’ theory, not a self-contained field. It only comes into its own when it is applied to specific instances and specific problems, and it always requires immersing oneself not just in semiotic concepts and methods as such but also in some other field” (Van Leeuwen 2004). Abrahamson cites Hopkins, providing a further definition of semiotics; “Semiotics, the study of sign and sign systems is an analytical tool of critical theory used to interpret cultural creations” (Hopkins in Abrahamson 1999: 2).

Socio-semiotics becomes effective when applied to a specific location or space, or context. Without said context, the study of the symbol is reduced to fixed meaning, an objective discourse that should be readily avoided as previously noted (Van Leeuwen, 2004). The context is what provides each symbol with its meaning. “Whenever discourses travel across the globe, what is carried with them is their shape, but their value, meaning, or function do not travel along. Value, meaning, and function are a matter of uptake, they have to be granted by others based on the prevailing orders of indexicality, and increasingly also because of their potential ‘market value’ as a cultural commodity” (Blommaert cited Jaworski and Thurlow 2010: 17).

## 2.4 Landscaping and cognitive landscapes

How we navigate and become comfortable with spaces relies on cognition, the act of thinking<sup>1</sup> of space as well as a feeling of a space. We draw together an idea of the space, what it signifies, how to navigate it – within our mental space. This allows us to write about places we visited, provide someone with detailed directions, or tell a story about a place seen long ago. This process is called

---

<sup>1</sup>.

environmental cognition and the representation of the spaces we conceptualize is called a cognitive map. (Abrahamson 1999). The ability to visualize a cognitive map allows us to navigate territory we have visited before without a cartographic map.

Similarly, as with the difference between cartography and landscapes, there is a difference between cognitive maps and cognitive landscapes. A cognitive landscape relies on the geographic framework we create through cognitive maps but goes on to include the symbolic features of the space. It allows us to have a connection to spaces which is instrumental in producing local identity.

Cognition also exists within the body, evident in the way humans can feel a cognitive map from within that also allow us to navigate territory we have visited before without a map. Cognitive landscapes are imbued with our emotions and so carry with them the symbolic significance of the space. The emotional and embodied dimension deserves further exploration yet sits outside the scope of this paper.

When we begin to become involved in new places, we start to map out the physical boundaries of the space and soon after we begin to build connotations of said space. The mental construction of cognitive links between space, map and connotations can be termed as cognitive landscaping.

*"Landscaping is thus a process that creates meaning in the landscapes and helps us to fill our cognitive landscapes with details, with areas we like, topophilia, and some that we dislike, topophobia." (Abrahamson 1999)*

## 2.5 Henri Lefebvre and the production of space

### 2.5 1 The production of space

Thinking of space is largely dominated by mathematical modes of thinking, according to Henri Lefebvre. We quantify the concept where our modes of engagement, are concerned with square metres owned, distance travelled, square footage of living quarters, years standing, the geographical size of our towns or cities. When we speak of space, however, we also attach to it emotional qualities associated with the environment, for example: safe, decrepit, natural, artificial, etc.

Henri Lefebvre sought to investigate these concepts of space through his philosophical work *“The production of space”*. Lefebvre refers to Descartes as a watershed moment in the revaluation of space in Western philosophy. Before Descartes the Aristotelian notion that space was merely subject to the naming of the phenomenon of the thinking philosopher. The concept of space had begun to become contemplated, in of itself, as an absolute. A container for living things, not only as an “empirical tool for ordering sense data”. (Lefebvre, 1991).

The mathematicians who had contemplated space were able to assign a multidimensional view, infinite in size, yet were unable to formulate a theory on the social significance of space. Mathematics created a science of space, quantifying its existences but unable to quantify the concept in its totality. Epistemological philosophers took it upon themselves to investigate notions of spaces and wrote of it as a “mental thing” and that while there are numerous philosophical theories that attempt to give meaning to space, they all posit their logic. In Lefebvre’s writing:

*“No limits at all have been set on the generalization of the concept of mental space: no clear account of it is ever given and, depending on the author one happens to be reading, it may connote logical coherence, practical consistency, self-regulation and the relationships of parts to the whole...” (Lefebvre, 1991: 3).*

He posits that the idea of mental space is overused and under-analysed, citing an example of Foucault’s, that “knowledge is a space in which the subject may speak of the objects with which he deals in discourse” (Foucault, 1996 cited Lefebvre 1991). But for Lefebvre, Foucault never defines or discusses this space. Lefebvre proceeds to show that there exists a tendency for authors who are

concerned with epistemology to cite space but never to bridge the epistemological and the space of the practical. This bridge of spaces becomes a key aim of Lefebvre, to postulate a theory of space where the practical and epistemological concerns are addressed. Following this Lefebvre asserts that epistemological thinkers have failed to render a science of space, whereby we can begin to construct a knowledge of space. His critique of semiology is similarly poised, stating that the practice of semiology is reduced to receiving and interpreting messages of lived spaces. Its insights are limited by its literary description imposed on urban spaces (Lefebvre, 1991).

The number of different and ‘independent’ theories utilizing space, is a cause for suspicion of the writings of many of the aforementioned schools. To Lefebvre, this represents a tendency prevalent in all aspects of writing on or of space (and society, according to Lefebvre) – the division of labour, or in this specific case, the intellectual mode of production. Lefebvre’s theory leans towards a Marxist theory of labour and goes on to state that, while these processes of labour and lived space are separated from one another, they are still subject to state control. Meaning they may appear to function as different understandings of social order but are in fact partitions operating under the same social order. This is best summarized as “Specialized works keep their audience abreast of all sorts of equally specialized spaces: leisure, work, play, transportation, public facilities – all are spoken in spatial terms” (ibid, 1991: 8)

The advent of these theories, according to Lefebvre, invoke three important principles: 1) the use of the political knowledge that functions under modes of production 2) the concealment of said knowledge through new rhetoric, and 3) a “technological utopia” which functions inside a larger dominant model of power. If these spaces were to be considered true it would mean that the world view is fragmented and that local concerns outweigh the global centralized power. According to Lefebvre, this can simply not be true, and any hint of truth speaks to a greater principle of truth to space. The influence of capitalism on space globally is common knowledge, with the many aspects (money, market, land, labour, trade, etc) of the system working in unison to exert power - through *hegemony*. (ibid, 1991: 10)

Hegemony was a concept introduced by Gramsci to define the power struggles between class relations. Hegemony is effectively the power exercised by the dominant class over others in determining the role and function of society. “It is exercised over society as a whole, culture and

knowledge included: and generally, via human mediation: policies, political leaders, parties, as also a good many intellectuals and experts. It is exercised over both institutions and ideas.” (ibid 1991: 10). Knowledge is an important factor in hegemonic domination and exercises its power over space. Piecing together a fragmented knowledge on space will not serve to facilitate true knowledge as knowledge should not be objective. According to Lefebvre, if a unitary theory were to be developed then the current mode of being would come to an end. Ultimately space is divided and not completely understood. We do not possess a complete theory of our natural world. While we research a theory of space there is still ample space for contestation within the paradigms of what is considered knowledge. There remain divisions between spaces in terms of the physical, mental, and social. However, when we speak of spaces such as private and public, art gallery, museum, school, research centre, park, sport; we may readily distinguish and understand each space by the whole. Lefebvre posits that if we analyze the array of spaces, in turn, we may access a code – *a spatial code* – which creates the means for understanding and navigating space. Herein lies the crux of Lefebvre’s aim, “The project I am outlining does not aim to produce a discourse on space, but rather to expose the actual production of space by bringing various kinds of spaces and the modalities of their genesis together within a single theory.” (Lefebvre 1991: 16) Lefebvre does not elaborate too much on the role of language as code but seeks to investigate the dialectical nature of codes in the production of spaces. “Codes will be a practical relationship, as part of an interaction between subjects and their space and surroundings. I shall attempt to trace the coming-into-being and disappearance of coding’s/decoding’s. I will aim to highlight *contents* – i.e., the social (spatial) practices inherent to forms under construction” (ibid, 1991: 18)

According to Lefebvre, in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the state was exerting its influence on a global scale. Under the format of regulation and rational argument, hegemonic power erases all conflicting ideologies and places itself as the central authority of logic. All subversive culture that resists broken and time is flattened in a Hegelian sense, that is to say, “time is solidified and fixed within the rationality immanent to space” (ibid, 1991)

This normativity imposed by the state will not ultimately quiet down all dissent and the reaction of time. When they rise, they are answered through violence and control. Police response to student riots can be seen as an example of this. While they rattle the lid of containment they are ultimately

forced back down and brew their subversion in the confinement of their own normalized space until again, the cycle is normalized and subsumed into the hegemonic order.

*“...everything suggests that at present that the workers in the industrialized countries are opting neither for indefinite growth and accumulation nor for violent revolution leading to the disappearance of the state, but rather withering away of work itself.” (ibid 1991).*



### 2.5.2 Social Space is a Social Product

To undermine the power of hegemonic order, we must critically look at the spatial codes in action. The spatial codes form a practical relationship, of the interactions between subjects and the spaces they inhabit. Lefebvre posits, that the codes we have used for knowledge and social practice have been in disillusion for some time. Rather, than attempt to recreate them, we need to analyze their shortfalls and destruction to develop new spatial codes, to replace it with another “theoretical super coding”, rather than a reversal of current codes which will consist of the transference from product to production (Lefebvre, 1991: 26).

Lefebvre begins by stating that “(Social) space is a (social) product”, which comes across as redundant, but he elaborates stating that the reality we live in is a reality of its own, produced within and separated from the global functioning. It serves as:

*“a tool of thought and action, that in an addition being a means of production, it is also a means of control and hence of domination, of power; yet that, as such it escapes in part from those who would make use of it.” (ibid, 1991).*

It is an abstract space that is at one time real, like money, is abstract yet possesses a real implication. Social space according to Lefebvre is indistinguishable from mental space and physical space. Social space is not constructed on the content or a collection of information, but rather it is irreducible to a form imposed upon phenomena. The fact that social space is a social product is concealed by a double illusion – the illusion of transparency and the illusion of opacity. (ibid. 1991)

The illusion of transparency situates our social space as a place of free reign – allowing invention and activity to take place. It denotes social space as safe, and anything out of sight or undisclosed is treated as undesirable. According to Lefebvre the fetishism of “spoken word or ideology of speech” undermines the role of social activity. Spoken and written words are taken for social action. Based on this illusion it is believed that social transformation can be made to happen through communication alone (ibid, 1991).

The realistic illusion “is the illusion of natural simplicity” (ibid, 1991). This is to say simply, things are because they exist, the belief that things have more of an existence than the subject viewing them. To reject this empirical principle would be to reject all things as *real* and will plunge us back into the space of the mental and subsequently the illusion of transparency. This illusion places itself closer to materialism while the illusion of transparency is placed closer to philosophical idealism. “The illusion of substantiality, naturalness and spatial opacity nurtures its own mythology” (ibid 1991). They work together in their shortfalls, an example of this can be seen in nation-building projects attaching place to origin in times of failing idealisms (and vice versa, for example emphasizing the future of idealisms yet to be achieved).

### **2.5.3 Consequences of the social production of social space.**

Lefebvre ventures into the consequences of social space as a social product to provide further evidence of his hypothesis. The first implication that he holds is that natural space, that is physical space, is slowly disappearing out of view. He holds that natural space is the point of original departure, the space from which social space must surface and as such has not simply disappeared entirely. In fact, we are obsessed with nature, as a source and resource, but he states that we are ready to preserve it and speak of it in crisis but at the same time conspire, in the very act of living modern, to harm it in every way possible. Nature is becoming lost to our reality and soon becoming lost to thought, we will not be able to conceive of it – how can we – after we have changed its very being with our tools and ambitions.” True, nature is resistant and infinite in its depth, but it has been defeated, and now waits only for its ultimate voidance and destruction” (ibid 1991).

The second consequence of the social production of social space is that every society produces its own space. That is to say that each society offers its means of production to produce its social makeup. Lefebvre asks the question, how can we truly understand the mode of production of ancient cultures like the Greek or othered spaces like Asiatic spaces – the very fact is that they are encoded through the entirety of being within it, and to understand from the outside is merely impossible. The “notion of social space resists analysis because of its novelty and because of the real and formal complexity that it connotes” (ibid 1991). Social spaces are encoded on various levels of existence, as mentioned before, across the mental and physical. It assigns the social relations of reproduction, for example, based on racial characteristics, family upbringing, age, and sex. Secondly

it imposes its relations of production which is exemplified by social order, division of labour, caste and social classes, the social function of the collective, etc. (ibid, 1991). These two relations are intertwined, affecting each other in turn but are held as separate social spaces to make sense of each.

The nature of capitalism is such that these relationships have become more complex. Three interrelated levels must be accounted for. Namely: 1) biological reproduction, denoted by the family 2) the reproduction of labour-power, denoted by social class e.g., the working class. 3) the reproduction of social relations of production, denoted by the relationships which define capitalism in of itself. (ibid, 1991)

Furthermore, Lefebvre notes, the use of symbolic representation further codifies these practices. Symbols are used in our social space to reinforce the status quo of these reproductions. For example, the “representations of the relations of are sexual symbols of male and female, sometimes accompanied by symbols of age”. Symbols of reproduction of production are represented in space, in our architecture (buildings, monuments, museums, skyscrapers, etc) and works of art and together are protected by its specialist and characteristic guardians, its literal and metaphorical police. (ibid, 1991)

Lefebvre points to the conceptual triad which emerges from the above-mentioned concepts:

1. Spatial practice: embracing production and reproduction in the particularity of its locale and the social formation. It is tasked with upholding a continuity of the hegemonic project and forming bonds between its spatial actors. Enforcing an expected level of competence and performance.

2. Representation of space: entwined into the relations of production and order. This is concerned with the knowledge, and particularly how we conceive space.

3. Representational spaces: which constituted more complex symbolism. This is where semiotic meaning is constructed or maintained. “sometimes coded, sometimes not, linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life, as also to art” (ibid, 1991)

## 2.6 Conclusion

The schools of humanist Geography, semiotics and the work of Henri Lefebvre describe space outside of its common association towards theoretical mathematics and commodification. The humanistic turnaround of the theory of space provides a critical framework to research questions concerning the ideological orientation of space.

Henri Lefebvre's theory of space provides a unified theory towards decoding the phenomenon of meaning-making through space and its effect on producing the social agents in spaces themselves. Lefebvre, Harvey and Sorlin all emphasize the social construction of space. These "markers of territory" (Sorlin in Jaworski and Thurlow 2010) represent contestation between spatial actors in the social production of space. Lefebvre takes this one step further however and posits that space is hegemonically controlled by a globalised order of capitalism. Lefebvre relies on Marx's theory of space and posits that we turn from product to production within space we will be in the process of freeing ourselves from a hegemonic control over space. He goes on to posit how the control over spaces are maintained by the illusion of transparency and opacity. He also posits how the space is socially produced and reproduced through the spatial triad.

A hegemonic globalised space concludes that within it, there exists no room for other ideas of space. Space is constructed socially now more than ever, with the advent of technological utopias and our drifting relationship with physical space; most notably characterized by an increasing global disregard for the physical presence and the effects our actions have on our natural space. Lefebvre posits that when we reconnect and produce new spatial coding in physical we subvert the global hegemonic order which functions largely through the coding of global capitalism. While the philosophical consideration of Lefebvre's theory of space can be far-reaching, and beyond the scope of this paper, his description of hegemonic control of spaces is a useful insight into the production of space.

## CHAPTER 3: CONTEXTUALISING THE SPACE OF STUDY

### 3.1 Introduction

The intended purpose of this chapter is to contextualize the following question: Why should decolonization be a concern for Stellenbosch University (and other tertiary institutions in South Africa)? To do so, I will write about the history of education in South Africa and how it pertains to colonialism, apartheid and the post-apartheid state. There are various nuances to the historical debate which reach outside the scope allotted for this section of the paper, but I intend to provide an overall view based on the research conducted from various sources in and around South Africa. The history of Stellenbosch is intimately tied to colonial history and thus concerns a decolonial history. By knowing and understanding the history of South Africa it will cast a light on decolonial concerns in the present day.

This historical account of the space relates to the formation of the town of Stellenbosch under colonialism, the tools of the colonial project in education in South Africa and the control of space under the apartheid government. Once an account of the history is made, the chapter will attempt to address the concerns of decolonisation through Achille Mbembe's writings.

I will then attempt to narrow the focus on the specific institutional history and functioning of the gallery space of the university gallery. I will then look towards decolonial theory operating around questions of education and institution to create a theoretical framework to consider the gallery space.

#### 3.1.1 Education during colonial rule and apartheid

It is well known that Christian missionaries were some of the most daring colonists on the African continent. Starting as early as 1450, they sent countless missionaries across Africa to spread the gospel to the *unenlightened* and *demonic African peoples* (Mbembe, 2021). Deeply underpinned by this ideology, Christian missionaries formed some of the earliest schools in Africa, though the circumstances and outcomes of the missionaries aims were varied across the continent (Fourie & Swanepoel: 2015, N. Ndlovu: 2002, Ajayi [et al]: 1996). South African missionary efforts towards education came later than many of the rest of Africa but were considered by the imperial church to be examples of "great success" (Ajayi [et al]: 1996). Some of the earliest documented around

1799, in King Williams Town in the Eastern Cape (N. Ndlovu, 2002: 20). However Christian affairs and state affairs were not always in alignment. Later in the development of Christianity in Africa, Christian missionaries were for the abolishment of slavery and often gave refuge to reluctant farmworkers and former slaves. They attracted many followers this way, offering a place of shelter. It proved to be an effective tool in the spreading of Christianity throughout Africa. The education of many of these followers would primarily start with reading and writing of European languages, to promote Western education and Christianity alike. In the case of South Africa, education came after colonization; the colonized were forced to give up resistance, accept subservience, cooperate with the colonizer and give up any study or pursuit of military endeavours. In return, status was provided to those enlisted to the mission, particularly to those who wielded tribal power. By the time these educational institutions were established in South Africa, the Christian missionaries had already realized that training pastors and teachers would only enamour the mission's success. A select few were even sent abroad for training. As this continued generationally, it became clear to many Africans who had benefitted from Western education, that this was a way to secure status and work in the continually modernizing society they were facing under colonization. (Ajayi [et al], 1996).

This phenomenon was most notably observed when the Lovedale Institution was established in 1841 and would start training "Bantu youth" in industrial skills such as carpentry, smithing, printing and book-binding; as well as other service professions such as interpretation, evangelists and teachers (Ajayi [et al], 1996). By then the pacification of many sectors of the country was coming to an apex, education of native African peoples created cultural division and ultimately stilled any momentum in a unified resistance.

Eventually, by the early 1900s in South Africa, there were missionary schools right through the country, on various levels. These efforts were largely funded by private institutions and the church, the British administration was not interested in educating colonized Africans. However, in 1829, The South African College at Cape Town was established for English-speaking whites. The same year the Victoria college for Afrikaans speaking whites was established in Stellenbosch. By the middle of the century, there was a board established for the maintenance and induction of white settler graduates into official civil roles inside the government (Ajayi [et al], 1996).

Under British colonial rule, the government was not eager to provide support for black education as they feared that educating non-whites would create insurgency. A hundred years later the need for African teachers grew stronger, as the urbanization of South African industry began to spread. By then the English colony was well established, private industries took heed from the missionary's drive to educate African natives and made a considerable contribution to expand the first Bantu university, but the state's contribution was minimal at best (Ajayi [et al], 1996). The first University for whites was established 100 years before the first university for black scholars was established in 1916, namely: Fort Hare University in the Eastern Cape (Reddy, 2004). The University of Fort Hare, hosted some of the most influential leaders in the ranks of the anti-apartheid movement, the likes of Oliver Tambo, Desmond Tutu, Robert Sebekwe, Nelson Mandela, Chris Hani – though many were expelled due to student protest in 1940. The same year the University of Fort Hare was established was the same year the Anglo-Boer war had come to its conclusion. There was pressure on South Africa at the time to support the efforts of World War 1 and so General Louis Botha declared the under the banner of the University of South Africa, the South African Native College (which would go on to become the University of Fort Hare) open for selective student enrolment. Only Xhosa speakers and Sotho from the Transkei. The Victoria College became the University of Stellenbosch that very same year, under the banner of the independent Orange Free State and Transvaal. All Afrikaans speaking tertiary institutions were the first to outwardly ban the admission of non-whites, though this seemed to be an unspoken rule of all-white universities that came before, Afrikaans or not. (Ajayi [et al], 1996).

Once the Apartheid government came into power in 1948, these “Bantustan” universities were utilized as a means of control, to apply their agenda of state control. The Bantu Education Act of 1953 abolished all missionary schooling. In 1959, under the “Extension of Universities Act,” four new “Bantu” universities were built so that each could be used for selective racial grouping. The University College of the North at Turfloop was established for Sotho, Tsonga and Vendas near Pietersburg in North Transvaal. The University College of Zululand, at Ngoya in Natal, was built for Zulu and Swazi students. The University of the Western Cape, in Bellville South, became the Coloured university, and the University College of Durban was built for the Asian population of South Africa (Reddy, 2004; Ajayi [et al], 1996). In addition, it closed off any new non-white applications to the University of Cape Town, the University of Witwatersrand and the University of

Natal. The policy was not well received by different racial groupings, as well as the broader international community (Beale 1998).

*“Apartheid education had as its deliberate objective the systematic underdevelopment of intellectual skills and human potential ... what apartheid education has done - not as an incidental effect but as deliberate policy - is criminal” (Jakes Gerwel in Unterhalter, 1991: 125 cited in Ajayi [et al], 1996: 73).*

The roles of the Bantustan universities were somewhat incidental, as the universities themselves were not major institutions directly involved in the overthrowing of the apartheid government. These universities did, however, act as spaces conducive to the establishment of political networks, where protestors and progressive academics could exercise coordination and practice. (Reddy 2004). In this way, they were spaces that slowly unravelled their intended function in the development of a segregated South Africa.

### **3.1.2 Apartheid in South Africa: space and education**

During apartheid, the Nationalist Party sought to extend their control of citizenry through higher education institutions. Universities, like other institutions, were segregated into respective ethnic groupings. Each ethnic group had an administrative process with specific hierarchical categories imposed. The prospective roles and educational programs were also limited according to ethnic grouping, with whites having the exclusive freedom to access the highest levels in education and work placement. This treatment of education sought to further divide the apartheid state into the former regimes’ racial absolutes. It established a social, economic and cultural divide between races that lasted long after apartheid ended. Those who were classified as non-white were designated lesser roles that were meant to serve as labour to the privileged minority. (Reddy, 2004)

This policy not only had a direct influence on the social, economic and cultural role of non-whites in South Africa but would have a lasting impact on the generations that followed. It has in large, maintained the privileged social position and generational wealth of its white benefactors long after apartheid ended, with many young non-white students being the first to enter university



parented by the labour force of South Africa. It has left a massive imprint on the psychology of cultural belonging in South Africa. Reddy writes:

*“The ideological functions of educational policy under Apartheid were designed to fit the apartheid social arrangement of society: it distributed educational resources unequally on the basis of “race”, its objective was to “teach” subaltern you that their Otherness (inferiority) was “natural”, it aimed to constitute thoroughly docile subjects whose will to resist would be crushed and policed by themselves, and finally it aimed to establish two “types” of subaltern political classes – a small elite to operate the administrative structures of the subaltern (in the Bantustans and urban states) and a labouring class to perform unskilled labour for the industrial economy (Reddy 2000 cited in Reddy 2004).”*

### 3.1.3 Stellenbosch: a segregated space.

Stellenbosch is the second oldest colonial town in South Africa. It is also one of the richest areas in South Africa, boasting the highest number of companies registered on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange and two-thirds of South Africa’s billionaires. Yet it is “probably one of the most segregated cities in South Africa” (Donaldson, 2021: 3). Since the end of apartheid much of the physical divisions between races, aside from the campus residence, remains.

To understand this phenomenon, we need to look at what shaped it in the first place. Stellenbosch was a settler town taken by the Dutch settler Simon Van Der Stel in 1679, after the Khoi-Dutch war (Donaldson, 2021). Since then, it has undergone numerous changes, but the city centre remains grounded in its Dutch heritage. With the arrival of the English, the town became a stronghold for Dutch colonizers and a bastion for the subsequent emergence of the Afrikaner movement. The secret organization of the Broederbond, an all-male Calvinist-Afrikaner movement, was founded in Stellenbosch after the Second Boer War (Donaldson, 2021). Every president during the apartheid regime was a member of the Broederbond, and nearly all were alumni of Victoria University (or Stellenbosch University). The exception being, the last leader of apartheid, P.W Botha, who did not graduate at SU but served as its chancellor. Due to this history, Stellenbosch as a space has essentially developed through segregation. It has been segregated by law for 322 years, laws which only fell away 27 years ago. The effects of segregation in the region have redefined the space. I don’t think the point is to try to return to a pre-colonial knowledge but rather build a new spatial code with which we consider the space. Only by unpacking the reproduction of labour in the space. The formation of the three major non-white regions of the area, namely: Cloetessville,

Idas Valley and Kayamandi were part of a scheme to reproduce the labour force of the Stellenbosch colonial elite. The university's institutional history under apartheid left long-standing effects in these communities. Today these spaces house a considerable part of the labour force for the towns central functions. Many of the racial divisions set in place geographical and economically have remained. My account of these three places only represent three small samples of what communities have lived through – it is only a small portion of what happened in the greater Stellenbosch region. Through freedoms uncovered in post-apartheid South Africa, many university scholars have dedicated themselves to writing new histories of Stellenbosch. David Rock, who published his thesis from the history department of Stellenbosch provides a succinct account of the history of Kayamandi and its construction under apartheid law. While the documentation of the forced removals of Die Vlakte by Hilton Biscombe has been an invaluable reference to the history of the formation of Coloured communities in Stellenbosch. Kayamandi, Cloetessville and Idas Valley were constructed and developed to keep the interaction between the non-white working class, and the area of the town, to a minimum. They are spaces that have developed under hegemonic control and so by unpacking a small portion of their history I would like to contextualize why these spaces (and the various others in the surrounding) are of concern when contemplating decoloniality in the space of Stellenbosch.

### 3.1.3.1 Forced Removals: 1950 Group Areas Act.

In South Africa, the term Coloured denotes someone who is of mixed racial ancestry. Colouredness was in no way an inherent racial profile that existed before. It was spurred by the arrival of the settlers who brought, traded and took slaves from around the world. It was a by-product of colonization and arguably the earliest signs of globalization. Terms like; “half-castes, bastards, Cape Boys, off-whites or coloureds” propelled a new racial grouping from the mixing of colonized Asians, Africans and Europeans alike (Adhikari, 2013). After the emancipation of the Khoi in 1828 and the abolishment of slavery in South Africa in 1834. These mixed identities represented a westernized labouring class in the colonial regime. The integration of the mixed racial colonized blacks increased dramatically, and a collective identity started to develop due to the social grouping on the lower tier of the colonizers' infrastructure. European colonizers depended on Coloured peoples for particular labour and many granted them a marginally better status versus

native black Africans. This was by large because they were intermixed with the race and culture of the Europeans. Coloured people were by no means treated as equals by the whites.

By the 1930s the central town of Stellenbosch was not totally separated before the installation of the apartheid government. Many Coloured families had gained higher socio-economic statuses and represented a “small-elite”. They ran businesses, schools, were political figures and much more. Most had adopted Afrikaans as their mother tongue and lived in heterogeneous collections of cultures, traditions and religions. However, they were never regarded as equals yet given greater privileges to migrant black Africans, who faced greater mistreatment and isolation in the town. The native areas act of 1923 already prohibited black Africans from owning and leasing land. Many Coloured families occupied land in the town centre, where their businesses, schools and recreational spaces operated. This area would be called Die Vlake. In July 1940, a large group of University students from the boarding house, Dagbreek, attacked Coloured residents of die Vlake and initiated what would be called the “the Battle of Andringa”. This incident was indicative of the increasing radicalization and violence towards non-whites. By the 1960s under the Group Areas Act, 3700 hundred people would be forcibly removed from their homes (Grundlingh, 2015) and relocated to the outskirts of town in the racial classified areas of Idas Valley and Cloetesville. This incident would cause intense trauma (Kannemayer, 2010). One resident would describe his emotions in the following way, “I was very angry and filled with hate. I couldn’t contain this hate and disappointment. Just imagine, for years you have built up your business together with your dad and other family members, and here they come to break it down. (Grundlingh 2015: 3)”

The communities of Cloetesville and Idas Valley remain Coloured neighbourhoods. Though there has been some integration after apartheid. The citizens who were forcibly removed have not received reparations for lost land. Many families have since left the Stellenbosch area, and many forcibly put away the pain of what was lost at the time.

### 3.1.3.2 The formation of Kayamandi: the Native Areas Act

Around 1920, the town of Stellenbosch was experiencing rapid industrialization. As result migrant workers were needed to provide labour for the town. After the Khoi-Dutch wars (1672-77), the Dutch seized fertile lands and settled Stellenbosch, the second colony established after the Cape,

in 1679. The British would The Khoi peoples means of life were greatly impacted by the arrival and conflict of the settlers, the space changed and the land became bordered off, The settlers will go on to war with other tribes in South Africa. This meant that Stellenbosch would effectively become a stronghold during the spread of colonization throughout South Africa.

By 1921, the Stellenbosch municipality proposed to house their entire black population in one area, a new concept at the time. The implementation of townships in South Africa had not yet come into existence. (Rock 2011)

In 1923 the Native Areas Act was passed by the Union of South Africa. The act prohibited the leasing and purchasing of land by black South Africans. It also stated that the black Africans were to be housed in 'reserves' demarcated by the government. They restricted the terms upon which they may live as workers on farms, confining and limiting access to the central town as possible. The act forced all black people to be housed in the area of Du Toitsville which was strategically placed on the outskirts of the town.

By 1938 the population of black peoples in Stellenbosch was around 300, and coloured peoples numbered around 3500. The black population were largely accounted for as migrant labourers from various tribal homelands in South Africa. Initially, only 7 huts were built in 1923 and with so many people at the time, the problem of housing and space would be a persistent issue in Kayamandi (Rock 2012). Throughout apartheid, its citizens would be controlled and exploited on the fringes of Stellenbosch – yet would provide the labour force for towns boom towards its eccentrically rich white population. The 1940s to 19h50s would see a rapid increase in the population of Kayamandi and the formalization of its early political structure. Most of these residents were migrants from the Transkei and Ciskei, who would be brought in solely to provide labour.

In the 1950s the pass law act was initiated nationwide. Effectively this would cause riots in the 1960s. The pass law essentially became a format for forced removal from the areas. The registration and passbook would control the movement of people inside the space and remove anyone considered non-essential to the workforce. This meant that many families would be relocated back to the Ciskei and Transkei, leaving the male-only workforce. By this time many of the residents had become politically organised, and during the 1960s riots and boycotts would sweep over the area organised by the Pan African Congress. (Rock 2012)

By the 1980s the town was very politically organised and eager to overthrow the dominion of its white oppressors. The influx of people into the town had not ceased and the housing issue remained a significant problem. By this stage there were generational disputes between new and old residents of Kayamandi, the latter often seeing the new with resentment, as the town gradually unfolded into a township. (Rock 2012)

Today the town is organised and has seen serious developments in the area.

“Over the families of Kaya Mandi have faced the pressures of forced removals, overcrowding, declining living conditions and increased levels of crime. However, there has always been a sense of pride in their community which allowed the community of Kaya Mandi to survive” (Rock 2012).

The town remains on the outskirts of Stellenbosch and has developed its centre of operation located on the main road.

### 3.1.3.3 Conclusion

The construction of Stellenbosch dates back to the second colony established in South Africa. Stellenbosch as a city space has an extensive colonial history and a large body of research that extend far beyond the scope of this segment.

Colonial power utilized education, under the banner of missionary work, as a tool of subversion of non-white populations and created human capital for the industrial expansion of the colonial project. However, there are indications that the project of missionary education did not always align with those of the colony and did not always play out as intended (N. Ndlovu, 2002 ). A new encounter was in the process of becoming, Western education systems in Africa produced changes to the socio-economic landscape that were unprecedented. The spread of missionary work contributed significantly to the expansion of Western education spaces and contributed to the erasure of indigenous African cultures and knowledge systems, exacerbated by the physical loss of land. The link between culture and physical land cannot be ignored, as they had a dramatic effect on the way of life of the native tribes of South Africa.

After the second Anglo-Boer war, the Union of South Africa sought to institutionalize tertiary education for non-whites. This was largely driven by the efforts of the Lovendale missionary project (Beale, 1998; Ndlovu, 2002)

The further institutionalization of education during apartheid, further industrialized the control of the state over non-white well-being. The Group Areas Act, further fractured racial belonging within the communal space. The movement and placement of people were more strictly controlled. This was the culmination of the universal gaze of the colonizers on African. It reduced living, breathing people to capital objectification. Controlling how people navigated and accessed space undermined their ability to produce belonging and meaning. In the case of forced removals, communities that were starting to establish new narratives and spaces to call their own were stopped in their tracks.

The university and the surrounding institutions had a distinct role in the oppression of the othered identities which they only recognized as labour forces. Even university grounds were built over the demolished homes of residents of die Vlakte. In light of the colonial history of the institution, the havoc caused around the university needs to be addressed. With many resources being held by institutions, in this case, power built from the colonial project, then it is these resources that must be wielded to confront the designs of apartheid within its public space. That is if a transformative project is the concern of public institutional education spaces.

### 3.2 Decoloniality and decolonisation: Mbembe

The history of Stellenbosch contextualized the colonial, but what constitutes the decolonial? What does the decolonial aspire to?

Achille Mbembe writes “If decolonization was an event at all, its essential philosophical meaning lies in an active will to community— as others used to speak of a will to power. This will to community is another name for what could be called the will to life (Mbembe, 2021)”.

The event which led to the spatial formation of Stellenbosch created physical cultural, psychological, and educational segregation amongst racial groups in the area. The University played a monumental role in the organization of the town and country, during the period marked by apartheid. The colonial and apartheid regimes sought after the segregation of peoples along racial lines. It sought out non-Whites to make up the labour forces of communities. The persistence of these racial groupings; geographically, culturally, and economically point to a spatial code that need still be decoded. I will rely on the writing of Achille Mbembe (2021, 2015, 2008) to illustrate several concerns of decolonisation within and outside academic institutions in South Africa to provide some perspective into what decolonisation could mean.

*“One of its theses is that decolonization inaugurated a time of branching off toward innumerable futures. These futures were by definition contingent. The trajectories followed by the newly freed nations were partly the consequences of internal struggles within the societies under consideration. These struggles were themselves shaped both by the old social forms and economic structures inherited from colonization and by the techniques and practices of government of the new postcolonial regimes” (Mbembe, 2021: 4)*

One distinction that Mbembe makes about the struggles that relate to the decolonization of post-colonial spaces is that they are composed of the old and, the new. The struggle in the context of South Africa is perhaps the inability to reconcile the old and the new.

The history of the post-colonial starts with the first encounter with the other. From that moment onwards, the post-colonial theory would be developed. Without that encounter, there would be no post colony, no spatial code with which to consider what the post-colonial means. The history of colonization and the current discourse of decolonization was only made possible by both the colonized and colonizer. It is a history of colonization is the history of globalisation and so has been produced and reproduced by its actors across the world. The encounter signalled a loss of world

for both parties – yet brought an entanglement with each other that would have to be resolved in some format to establish a new future for the post-colony. As Lefebvre (1991) toned, to create and prepare for the new, the old codes of spatial order must be deconstructed and replaced with a new supercoding. The colonial project is concerned with knowledge, language and education systems constructed for the European minority to seize the landscape. The establishment of various institutions demonized African culture and mythologised the European condition. Where these epistemic structures failed to preserve hegemonic control, violence would be the final resort.

Mbembe highlights several projects that concern the decolonization of knowledge systems operating within universities. From here I would like to highlight these as talking points to describe Mbembe's position on the decolonization of institutions.

The first condition for the decolonization of knowledge systems is the demystification of whiteness. While the colonizer and colonized both contribute to the writing of a shared history, they did not experience or share the same history. Mbembe's concern lies within these sentiments. A shared past without a common history has translated into a segregated sense of spatial belonging. This was a major point of contention during the Rhode Must Fall uprising at UCT, which spurred other students to take part in the quest for greater decolonization around campuses. This brought light to the hegemonic coding of our shared history.

It was observed when the Christian missionary first landed in the Congo in 1495 and 1506. African art and relics were regarded as work of the devil and so the first gaze of the colonizer was the missionary gaze. Witchhunt commenced out of the fear of satanic disorder and the over-sexualization of women. The mission set its sights on Africa as a space to be cleansed and salvaged in the light of European discourse (Mbembe, 2021: 150).

*"History is not a matter of force; it is also a matter of truth. Authority and dignity are not merely a donation coming from strength and power. One is therefore called upon to honour truth, and not only strength and power. The truth is that Europe took things from us that it will never be able to retribute. We will learn to live with this loss. Europe, for its part, will have to take responsibility for its acts, for that shady part of our shared history of which it has sought to relieve itself" (Mbembe 2021: 172)*



The displacement of both culture and location resulted in the destruction and preservation of languages, cultures and peoples alike. The founding of the mission was based on the refusal of colonial metaphysics to recognize the other and the unfettered ethical construct that conversion was salvation.

“In practice, conversion led to the invention of mixed cultures, made up of borrowings of all kinds, games of mixtures, risky reappropriations, and hybrid aesthetic practices. Conversion led to manifold misunderstandings, multiple paradoxes, and a complex process of redefinition of each of the protagonists in the encounter” (Mbembe, 2021: 152).

However, the advent of the missionary gaze was only the beginning of the creation of the myth. In South Africa, the English colonial efforts and the Dutch and apartheid regimes created a series of mythological figures and histories. These figures were of considerable value to the establishment of the great myth of race and triumph of reason in Southern Africa. They were the chief architects of the segregation and dismissal of non-white bodies in South Africa – and were subsequently immortalized by statues placed on pedestals. This brings us to the second gaze with which the colonizer represented and constructed themselves in the colony: the gaze of universal history (Mbembe, 2021). This is an important point which set off the Rhodes must fall movement. The University of Stellenbosch has its statues and memorial artefacts to the Afrikaner and colonial figures – and it too became apparent when student riots took place on campus. However, the language policy became the focus topic. A change that can be considered as part of a response to the Extension of University Education Act of 1959 (Beale M, 1998). It could be, that by hanging on to these artefacts and practices universities reject and alienate an alternate account of history – the history of the other, the history of the new. It is a history that is emotionally charged by the sacrifice of countless people while it glorifies the founders of separatism in South Africa. Gains made possible by the irreplaceable loss of others.

” Who can honestly deny that what was taken were not only objects but along with them enormous symbolic deposits, enormous reserves of potential?” (Mbembe 2021: 169).

When institutions protect and herald these histories, what does that infer about the aims of the university within its socially constructed spaces?

A large part of the arguments for the maintenance of the antiquity of Afrikaner culture expresses concern over a loss of history. How to handle and consider these artefacts is not unpacked in this

paper. The point I rather aim to make is that social spaces are re/produced by the memorialization of history – a suspension of time. The ennoblement of white supremacist histories inside the universities of the post colony presents a challenge to the formation of a human history. The myth of European settlers who blessed the global South with intelligence is purely a constructed, elaborate myth to perpetuate the colonial project. The hegemonic placement of these antiques as history diverts us away from a shared history. A history that may open the future. The visual ideologies present in spaces affect these spaces. They are part of the spatial coding of the past. To create a decolonized space the presentation of these monuments and history is a contentious topic – with a large deposit of literature in South Africa. It is outside the scope of my research to posit what to do with monuments. However, if any institution functioning within a national mandate, would call itself transformative then the spatial coding of these monuments must be considered.

“To compensate is about offering to repair the relationship” (Kwame Anthony Appiah cited in Mbembe 2021: 171)

If we read Mbembes proposal in light of Lefebvre’s theory of space, we can interpret that Mbembe’s is concerned with how space reproduces hegemony through its spatial coding. The spatial practice of monuments affects the emergence of post-colonial histories and identity. The representations of these spaces similarly question the university’s relevance in an emerging post-colonial discourse, particularly regarding what constitutes public development and space.

The second theme which Mbembe positions for the decolonization of universities is the role of architecture, public space and the common. According to him decolonizing starts with the de-privatization of and rehabilitation of space. “The democratization of buildings and of public spaces is inseparable from the democratization of access” (Mbembe, 2015). The culture of spaces needs to be constituted by all actors inside the space, this is what constitutes a democratic space. However, this theory is laden with issues that extend beyond state economics and into the global arrangement of capital production. The public or private nature has a murky reality in society, has been a subject contestation (Mbembe 2015, Thaver & Thaver 2010, Reddy 2004....). This paper ultimately depends on the notion that educational institutions are intended to serve the public and should be public assets –this may be far from what occurs. Public institutions in various spaces have been operating

between private and public. This signals a greater metanarrative of the post-colonies' entanglement with the global capitalist hegemony.

*“At the centre of these transformations is a redefinition of the terms of African states’ sovereignty. This first factor of change is in part the result of multilateralization, most visibly carried out by international financial institutions over the last twenty years and, in even more caricatural manner, by the actions of innumerable agents whose status exceeds by far the classical distinctions between public and private (nongovernmental organizations, private actors, and so on)” (Mbembe 2021: 173)*

When Lefebvre talks about the complexity of capitalism he talks about three things, a) the biological production, b) the reproduction of labour and c) the reproduction of social relations of production (Lefebvre, 1991). Many young people rely on access to schooling and resources to compete in the competitive job markets. This is somewhat illusory as this is exactly what reproduces the capital systems – it reproduces the labour, the social relations of production, and the biological production required. This method is presented as the most secure way towards upward mobility in the social classes. But without spatial access, without being represented, without financial capital - the task of completing a tertiary education is an enormous challenge for young South Africans.

*“Is this the only future left to aspire to – one in which every human being becomes a market actor; every field of activity is as a market; every entity (whether public or private, whether persons, business, state or corporation) is governed as a firm; people themselves cast as human capital are subjected to market metrics (rating, rankings) and their value is determined speculatively in a futures market?” (Mbembe 2015: 4)*

During the development of the aforementioned spaces, the University gallery developed too. The industrialization of the town, perhaps also brought with it the production of spaces of production, such as the art gallery. I will continue in the next segment to discuss the history of Gallery University Stellenbosch to contextualize the independent development of spaces within the metanarrative of the greater location.

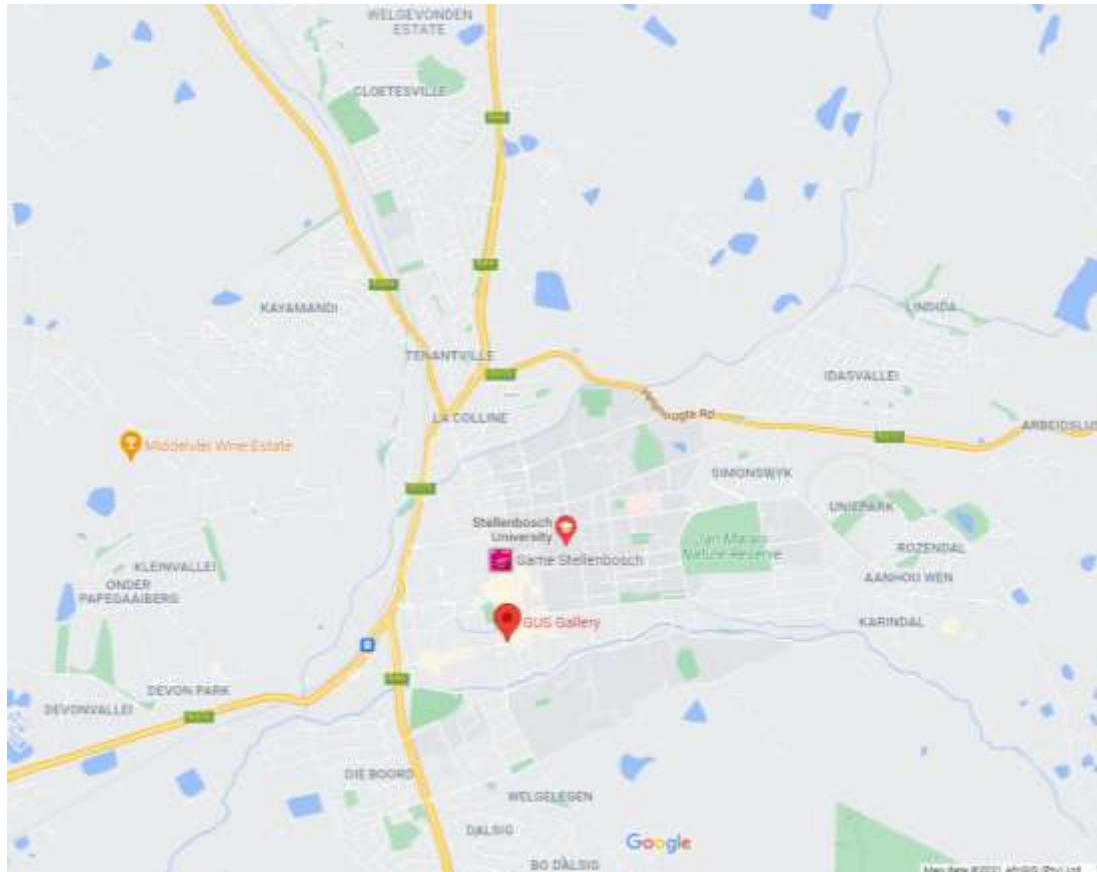


Figure 3: Google Maps (2021) Stellenbosch Area and GUS Gallery, scale N/A. Available from: <https://www.google.co.za/maps/@-33.9288239,18.8595626,14.66z> [Accessed 2021 September].

### 3.3 Gallery University Stellenbosch (GUS)

Still known to some as “the church (Afrikaans: die Kerk)” the Gallery University Stellenbosch is a declared national heritage site (Grade 2)<sup>2</sup>. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Stellenbosch the most dominant religion was the Dutch Reformed Church. By 1850, The Lutheran congregation had since increased and were searching for a place of worship for themselves. The church was crowd-funded by the congregation at the time and the architect, a member of the parish, offered his services for free. The building was built in 1954 in a Neo-Gothic style, designed by Carl Otto Hager. It served the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Stellenbosch until the 1960s. The Lutheran congregation left its

<sup>2</sup> An online record of this can be found at: <http://www.sahra.org.za/sahris/node/23007>

premises for a more modern building in 1963<sup>3</sup>. The building then served as a shop for a time and was eventually acquired by Historical Homes of RSA (LTD), owned at the time by late, Dr Anton Rupert. The building was donated to the University by Dr and Mrs Anton Rupert in 1969, in the hopes of garnishing a 'rich cultural future' (Cook & Fransen, 1980).

*An extract from the 1969 Cape Argus report (which is extracted out of the 1969 Matieland) reads "The opening of Stellenbosch University art gallery has a significance above and beyond the importance of its first show which, as it happens, is an excellent one..... With its first show, the Stellenbosch has been able to start with the best of both worlds. The collection of modern French tapestries is a superb example of an ancient medium revitalised and given contemporary relevance." (Dubow, N cited in Matieland, Stellenbosch University, JJ Oosthuysen [ed])*



*Figure 4: Dubow, N (1969) in Oosthuysen, O.O [ed]. 1969. Die Universiteit se Kunsruuseum. Matieland, 1969. No1. April 1969*

The gallery then operated as the Stellenbosch University Museum, showcasing an array of ancient and modern art. During this time, a wing was added to house the Maggie Loubser collection. The

<sup>3</sup> An online record of this can be found at <http://www.lutheranstellenbosch.co.za/our-story/>.

archival role of the gallery would eventually be passed over to the Sasol Art Museum after its establishment in 1991, now known as the Stellenbosch University Museum. From 2014, the Gallery University Stellenbosch was separated from the Sasol Art Museum (now, Stellenbosch University Museum) and proceeds to function as a contemporary cultural space.

There have been a considerable number of exhibitions by established and non-established artists alike. The site has also been used as a location for numerous other events, some not art related. What makes this space different from other notable galleries in the area is; that it is a university structure, a contemporary art gallery, an educational space and a national heritage site.

In 1969 this was a whites-only area functioning inside a whites-only institution, today it stands it operates in a different context. It is now a functional extension of the University, a site of culture in post-apartheid town which was at the centre of apartheid. The spatial imagery and markings of the past service a constant remembrance of misconstrued agendas and injustice. So, guided by its history, it stands upon a pedestal with divergent narratives. The gallery has indeed embraced a sense of multiculturalism since the change of governance in South Africa, but the spatial coding of the town remains segregated. The gallery has to grapple with its social coding within the metanarrative of segregation in past and present. Before the student riots and the surge in scrutiny of University institutions, Lydia De Waal, former curator of the Stellenbosch Museum, noted:

*“Questions pertaining to the ‘what’, ‘where’, ‘how’ and ‘why’ must be urgently addressed, not only in terms of financial implications, but especially in view of the function of this museum as a university museum and the needs of the immediate academic community, the community of Stellenbosch and environment, and researchers and visitors from further afield.” (De Waal, 2005).*

In central Stellenbosch, the gallery university Stellenbosch is currently one of two spaces that are connected to educational art institutions. The space is a vehicle for interaction between the academy, the viewer, and the art/artists. The institutional confines of a space like the Sasol Art Museum, prizes its collection for the preservation of history, whereas a space like the Gallery University Stellenbosch has more operational space to create contemporary cultural interactions between its actors and the space of Stellenbosch.

The department of overseer of the gallery, senior lecturer and professor, notes in her address for the Keith Dietrich Awards Ceremony:

*“We aim to position both GUS and the Visual Arts Department as places of connection between different communities, languages, and schools of thought. In their work, the students and lecturers of the Visual Arts Department graft various fields of knowledge onto one another to create new form(s) and knowledge(s). In our teaching as much as in our art-making processes, we constantly propose, negotiate, and practice processes of embedding and exchange. Ultimately, we believe, such processes bring about unification between various domains of knowledge, cultures, and histories. GUS will become another site where we give material form to interdisciplinary interchange and exchange, creating and rewriting diverse forms of intellectual and inventive hybridity.” (Guenter, 2015)*

Half a century after its founding the gallery is now open to the public with an aim towards a greater, democratically representative audience. With such an intent set, the aim for the creation of new knowledge is apparent in Guenter’s verse. A necessary part of the emergence of a decolonial future.

### 3.4 The gallery as an archive

*“Because the arts and culture have become integral parts of the economic, their capacity to engage critically with the velocities of capital can no longer be taken for granted. Spaces of culture are no longer just aesthetic spaces; they are also commercial spaces. This is one of the reasons why culture is more and more understood as “heritage,” “custom,” “the ancestral,” and it is in this sense that many would like to view it as a set of practices reducible to cash. Identity, on the other hand, is understood as “difference”— religious, ethnic, racial, gender, national” (Mbembe 2021: 24-25)*

The archive has become an ever-present tool since the rise of the information age. But with a vast network to draw upon the history can be “forgotten” inside the archive. In the opening segments of Jacques Derrida’s *Archive Fever*, he unpacks the definition and history of the archive. What stands out in the text concerning the aim of this thesis is, how the archive (the word itself and the concept) is formed through the ages. The term is derived from *Arkhe* which implies *documentation of the physical realm* but also the *governance of society through law*. The archive is collected, gathered, bestowed, cultivated, housed, etc upon those in power or those that subsequently gain power therefrom. Those in charge of the archive have at one time; a responsibility to protect the contents and the “hermeneutic right and competence” (Derrida, 2003: 9). There is a gravity of political precedence situated around the archive. “Effective democracy can always be measured to this

criterion: the participation in and the access to the archive, its constitution, and its interpretation.” (Derrida, 2003: 4).

While the archive is an institution of remembrance, it can also be a site of forgetting – we forget to turn our gaze onto the institution, and in turn, forget to question it. The implications of the ‘small’ acts of culture in a workaday can be overlooked. A possible step to addressing issues in contemporary cultural life is to consider the history and implications of the practices within archives themselves, not only the contents of the archive.

To know our histories is important, but writing new histories are crucial in creating the decolonial. The Gallery University Stellenbosch is a precarious space. Because it is connected to the university it has access to resources and academic status. Because of its geographical location, it has a legacy of segregation to overcome and occupies a central space in the inner town of Stellenbosch. It is a space with the agency to explore critical practice and ideation. It is a space where experimentation and integration of new models can happen. It is a space of authorship and production. Lefebvre states that when the role of production is reversed within the spatial code, we subvert the hegemonic power (Lefebvre 1991).

In his address of the decolonization of knowledge, Mbembe calls for “classrooms without walls and the different forms of intelligence” (Mbembe, 2015) he continues by stating

*“In order to set our institutions firmly on the path of future knowledges we need to reinvent a classroom without walls in which we are all co-learners; a university that is capable of convening various publics in new forms of assemblies that become points of convergence of and platforms for the redistribution of different kinds of knowledges (Mbembe 2015: 6)”*

I would posit that an educational gallery space could fulfil such a request. The notion of decolonial space in Stellenbosch is extremely significant, therefore an educational gallery space in Stellenbosch has to reflect and be aware of its institutional operation. There are many challenges, which operate in different spatial groupings, to the integration of university gallery into a format of the decolonial. This is what makes it an exciting case study. The historical, geographical and psychological divide between the university gallery and the surrounding communities present a major hurdle to climb. Furthermore, the economic pressure of the hegemonic control of the capital institution is multi-folded. It stems from the pressures of the art market, from knowledge as capital and the education-for-profit complex and the reproduction of the social construction of



the university. The gallery, however, I would consider being a lab for the faculty of the humanities. It is a place where the possibility of experimentation in knowledge construction can flourish if the condition of democratization can be met.

### **3.5 Strategies for Decoloniality in Education.**

Pedagogy is focused on the subject of becoming, or rather, the subject becoming. It understands the relational components of the educational encounter and seeks to instil the ability to think about transformation. It is not simply about accepting or absorbing knowledge but rather navigating it and understanding its relationship to ourselves and the world outside ourselves. “..... pedagogy turns on the ability of the nascent subject to change, to alter, to become something other than what it was. The subject accomplishes this self-alteration through its capacity to negotiate meaning in the world in relation to the objects and persons around it” (Todd, 2001).

Decoloniality expresses a deep intent to deconstruct racial differences in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The defining markers of coloniality, however, are not as clear cut in the postcolonial condition. Wors change shape and meaning. The motives themselves are hidden behind new strategies. Ruben Gaztambide-Fernandez notes that today we are faced with deeply paradoxical and contradictory movements that are reconfiguring the human condition. Ecological domination and military invasion are causing an increase in human suffering. There is also, congruent to this, a realization of the suffering of indigenous peoples, a rise of post-colonial politics and new configurations of governance or economic developments which seek to reconfigure power dynamics in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. (Gaztambide-Fernandez 2012:42)

The power of education is such that it strikes at epistemological and ontological assertions. If utilized optimally, it creates a framework for deep critical thinking. Gaztambide-Fernandez believes that educators have the significant responsibility of fulfilling this role of rearranging societal assumptions and addressing/healing the atrocities of coloniality. Construction of a new encounter is required by abandoning the traditions of logic in formal schooling and regarding the individual as a site for social change (Gaztambide-Fernandez 2012: 42). By reconfiguring the nature of our ontological and epistemological assumptions emancipatory education strives to readdress the initial encounter with the other, indeed, the very notion of othering; to create a format for social change.

Educational narratives are far-reaching and have such a wide array of representational structures. The focus then of this segment is pedagogy, and how it concerns decoloniality. Education through

a traditionally structured curriculum is dedicated to the development of students to become a certain body, whether citizen, scholar, engineer, etc. What should be noted is that it is a form of education that can be more easily controlled via institutional bodies, such as a company, the state or the university. The aim is to create a constructed model of knowledge and pass it on to the student – the institutional body concerned exerts power over its students' knowledge and validates which knowledge is *correct*. The hidden power structure of the curriculum's epistemological construction is not something that should be overlooked. Curriculum and pedagogy signify a divergent attitude to education. Where curriculum is directed towards a person, pedagogy is concerned with the relationship of participants (student-teacher-society) and their relationship towards the knowledge expressed.

“Pedagogy starts at age zero and no one knows when it ends. The aim of pedagogy (or *paideia*) - I am of course speaking normatively - is to help the newborn hopeful and dreadful monster to become a human being, to help this bundle of drives and imagination to become an *anthropos* . . . . The point of pedagogy is not to teach particular things, but to develop in the subject the capacity to learn . . .” (Castoriadis cited in Todd 2001)

In light of this quote, I would posit, that our engagement with space starts from the age of 0. All spaces are spaces of pedagogy, of learning and experience. When we become producers of space, if we can, then we enter a self-reflexive account of practice and theory. Whereby our spaces are produced by the people and produce the people. Thus creating critical feedback of production and reproduction. Part of this process is producing cultural artefacts – whether they be through engagements, physical art production or theoretical observations. The dissection of old and the creation of the new knowledge is a tool we have at our disposal to further the project of supercoding our spaces. We must be aware that the recoding space requires, not only knowledge but action.

Decolonial theory is deeply connected to the construction of *praxis*. In short, praxis is a theoretical concept used to describe the combination of theory and action. The term has been used as early as the platonic schools and was utilized in the description of the day-to-day type of knowledge acquired through living with others. Praxis is concerned with political, social, and ethical action, which includes how we learn and actualize knowledge.

“*Praxis is that human mode of conduct that contains its meaning in itself and whose completion therefore consists in its satisfactory accomplishment*” (Ball 1977).

The instability of the concept praxis is characteristic of its content, dependent on time, place, and action. The concept of praxis and theory would change, starting with the Neo-Platonist and early Christian philosophers. Praxis became reinterpreted, through thinkers such as St. Augustine, it popularized bringing religious morals and political beliefs into everyday life.

Kant would later take the distinction between making and doing to new discussions, but as Lobkowitz notes, there is no philosophical tradition that has talked about praxis more than Marxism. (Ball 1977). Marx was largely influenced by Hegel's phenomenology (Morrow & Torres 2002: 25) Hegel linked thought and action, to form a theory of dialectical materialism. Through an engagement with Hegel's phenomenology, Marx sought to define a way of life that combined theory and action, and because the actions of one often affect others, this becomes an inherently politically driven affair.

Praxis is commonly associated with Paolo Freire and his education for social justice, problem-posing education. Praxis to Freire can be summarized as follows: "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it". For us to become "fully human" we must name and act upon the world to create change (Mulcahy, Mulcahy, Mulcahy 2015: 135-141).

Freire's praxis has become more than its container/word and has come to be a symbol for an educational revolution worldwide, appealing to love and solidarity (Allsup 2003). Freire emphasizes action and thought not just as a mobilization tactic, but also to help us critically question theory and how knowledge affects our daily lives. Drawing on Hegel and Marx (Morrow & Torres 2002: 25), Freire adopts that knowledge is socially constructed, particularly by those in power, and dependent on history. Freire sees the way and method of schooling to be a means for control, in the interests of the elites. (Mulcahy, Mulcahy, Mulcahy 2015). To claim our truly human existence we must utilize a true praxis that is ethical in addition to being reflective (Allsup 2003: 162). This connection between theory and practice is entangled in space.

Just as Freire asserts activity, actualizing practice can only happen in physical space. Lefebvre touches on the importance of action when he speaks of the physical space, the natural space. The aim of his research into the theory of space was to establish a connection between epistemology and lived reality. The emphasis of the actual performance of a decolonial theory must take place in natural space for the spatial hegemony to be challenged. The university art gallery is a space where the performative aspect of a decolonial education can be developed. In the gallery space, there can

be practice and theory. It is a place where theoretical research can be developed to form social interaction and cultural production. The radical can be reinterpreted as the experimental. That is not to say it is a space of freedom, I have already illustrated some of the metanarratives of hegemonic control that institutions confront.

The metanarrative whereby we reduce all to its capital construction is one such challenge. It is an important point of reference for both Lefebvre and Mbembe. It is present in boundless forms of post-colonial theory. It stands an elephant in any room, masked by the illusion of transparency and opaqueness (Lefebvre, 2009). It creates the modes of social engagement, dictates our movements and overwhelms our existence. This is no different in the context of the gallery space. The economic and financial issues faced by the gallery are a heavy burden on the path to decolonization.

Gene Ray posits the question “What are the conditions of possibility for artistic practices that can justly be called ‘anti-capitalist?’” (Ray 2007: 2). He goes on to say that three possible models for critical and radical cultural practice. They are “critically affirmative art”, “avant-garde practices” and “nomadic practices”. Critically affirmative art represents, is the art practice guided radical theory but facilitated by the hegemonic code of the gallery and its metanarratives the capitalist art production. “This strategy has long been known as *institutional critique*” (Ray 2007: 4). Ray reasons that this is not a feasible form of anti-capitalism. Regardless of its underpinnings, it enters the space in an institutionally constructed manner. It is commodified and subsumed, and so its subversive intent is moot. The other two strategies Ray reasons are more effective operations of anti-capitalist art. The avantgarde presents the potential for the new. It avoids the structures that are and seeks new trails. It encompasses the production of new codes. By its very nature, the avant-garde must drift from the confines of the gallery - if is to be called the avant-garde. It must bypass the spatial coding of the hegemonic art complex and seek to affect produce new coding connected to our natural space. Ray cites the movements of the Surrealists, Constructivists, Futurists and many others. He explains that these groups sought to bypass the “political powerlessness imposed by art autonomy by directly integrating their practices into the sphere of everyday life”. (Ray, 2007: 4)

The nomadic format is the artist who sits on the outskirts of exile while remaining open to institutional integration. This practice allows for manoeuvrability between ideological and physical spaces. They play all the games and make all the choices case by case. A veil of security can be carried by selective institutional affiliation while at the same time undermining metanarrative by

stealthily carrying encrypted subversion from the other side of the ivory fences. These are effectively the double agents of the ideological art complex. (Ray, 2007).

From Ray's conclusion would it be possible to produce anti-capitalist art within the confines? Certainly not through his definition of the avant-garde and not through the position of institutional critique. The nomadic model presented by Ray appears to be the only solution that fits in the context of this thesis. The power perhaps lies in the ability to bridge and construct new relationships between spaces, which ultimately go on to inform the spaces themselves. I also wonder about a fourth option, the option of rewriting the spatial code of the gallery itself. This would be a monumental task, but why stop there....why not the rewriting of the entire capitalist order? These tasks would require more than the effort of one art gallery or even the effort of all the art galleries combined. It would require a total revolution that is connected and decisive. This may be a naïve idealism, but it does highlight that connectedness drives agency. The nomadic artist is connected to various spaces and allowed to navigate through the cracks of spatial coding. They gain their limited authority through connectedness. And so too, connectedness is an important facet of rewriting spatial coding in an art gallery. The art gallery gains knowledge and influence by its connectedness to actors and other spaces. In terms of creating a new reality for the entire world, I think that is outside the scope of what an institutional gallery such as Gallery University Stellenbosch can accomplish. It can, however, have an important role in the production of its surrounding spaces. The gallery must at once navigate hegemonic control while producing new histories and encounters if it is to be decolonial. Ultimately there exist frameworks of operations which I will introduce in the next section.

### **3.6 Frameworks of Decoloniality/Decolonisation**

To help understand the framework within which decolonization can operate, I would like to borrow Andreotti, Stein and Ahenakew & Hunt's framework of decolonial thinking and action. In a way to formulate a strategy for looking at the perspectives of post-colonial African philosophy and what the outcomes may be.

Andreotti, Stein and Ahenakew & Hunt utilize the concept of social cartography to help readers understand the paradigms by which we can understand the demands of decolonization in response

to western pedagogical apparatuses. In short, they conceptualize four categories of definition to establish a framework to outline the concerns apparent within decolonial action. (Andreotti, Stein and Ahenakew & Hunt 2015: 22). The first space constitutes an affirmation of the ideals of modernity, inscribing praise on the advancement of science, technology, political dispensation, the conception of time, autonomy, capitalism, and the notion of progress. This space evolves by asserting that we have never been more comfortable, wealthy or at ease in the history of humankind – and tempering with the status quo through critical reflection is wasted time and energy – everything will be resolved through the further innovation of the modern paradigm. Interestingly, Andreotti, Stein and Ahenakew & Hunt call this space the: *‘Everything is awesome’ space* (Andreotti, Stein and Ahenakew & Hunt 2015:25)

The second space, they call the *soft-reform space*, is focused on the inclusion of marginalized concerns or peoples. The core of concerns is situated as oversights generated by the past failure of the institution to recognize difference. Individuals are still left to their own devices to achieve success according to the value of the system they are now allowed to enter. There is an acknowledgement of difference but there is no challenge to the epistemological or ontological foundations held within the institution. The fundamental proposition is that everything can be solved through inclusion and rational dialogue. There is no acknowledgement of the fact that the debate or relationship is set out in the terms predefined by those in power and essentially skewed from the onset. Disruption, protest, and conflict are readily broken down as unnecessary, barbaric, and emotional. The only compromises reached in this space are based on rational discourse which would not upset the power of the status quo. (Andreotti, Stein and Ahenakew & Hunt 2015: 26)

The third space is called the *radical reform space*, where the *soft reform space* does not recognize the relationship between power and the disempowered is skewed in its very construction, the radical reform space does. The radical reform space consists of an interruption of the power dynamics to redefine the distribution of resources, opportunities, and authorship/ownership. Often arguments from the radical reform space usually focus on one aspect of systematic oppression which needs reconfiguring to prioritize pertinent issues within the locality of its argument. As Andreotti, Stein and Ahenakew & Hunt note, “this often leads to an expansion of the modern system, rather than enabling alternatives to it” (Andreotti, Stein and Ahenakew & Hunt 2015: 27).

A parallel can be shown in the mode of capitalist art and its relationship to indigenous art practices. Folk art is often subsumed by a capitalist art narrative, and while providing some sort of

compensation and recognition, is often exploitative of the artist by undervaluing their practices and overlooking the philosophical significance thereof due to the ontological positioning of art practice.

The final space is called the *beyond reform space*, where the radical-reform spaces make use of epistemological arguments the beyond reform space considers the ontological grounding of our current systems. It positions its arguments considering that our very way of being is compromised and any attempt to make arguments thereupon is doomed by its inherent flaw, namely that modernity is constructed by the logic of oppression. While acknowledging that the position radical reform is necessary, beyond reform arguments considers them insufficient to change the shortfalls of modernity. The grammar and logic of the system are deeply entrenched in the very institutions we seek to overcome, by simply expanding or transforming the shape we do not change the foundation matter upon which the power dialectic is constructed in the first place.

### 3.7 Conclusion

In the first section of the chapter, the reasons for decolonization is established through an account of the history of the space itself. For the space to continue to exist it must have relevance to its community constituents. However, the production of space is not only created through what has happened in the past. The postcolonial state has produced new narratives that could either assert or deconstruct the current spatial coding of the space. I would argue that the approach of decolonizing institutions, is not only in the interest of the community but also in the interest of oneself. It seeks to overthrow the rules of racial difference, while the opposing hegemony seeks the reproduction of labour and social class. It creates a future with no alternative until we are all colonized under capitalism. For the emancipation of space and its peoples, whatever credence or colour, we must exit the current homogenous factory of the global capitalist hegemony. This reads like a grand statement, and it is. The actual practice and means to reach that state are not completely clear and I believe it is beyond the scope of forming pockets of decolonial spaces. The spaces we inhabit are part of the matrix in process of becoming and therefore, impossible to gaze at.

*“Difference itself has often been understood as that which separates and cuts off one cultural or historical entity from another. A decolonial act, in this perspective, is taken to be an act of disconnection and separation (a gesture by which one is cut, or one cuts oneself off from the rest). The challenge has therefore been to understand difference not as a*

*secessionist gesture, but as a particular fold or twist in the undulating fabric of the universe— or in a set of continuous, entangled folds of the whole” (Mbembe 2021: 80)*

While the conversation of decolonisation is informed by the issues of globalized hegemony, its also informed by others. The whole is constructed by its folds, and if we operate through various frameworks discussed (Andreotti, Stein and Ahenakew & Hunt 2015) (Ray, 2009) new social arrangements can be constructed. While the *beyond-reform* spaces appear as an immobilizing hurdle in the work-processes required for true democratization – we cannot stop and say “well that’s how it always “, “it is the only way this works”. This is exactly how the system of hegemonic power reproduces itself, as Lefebvre points out about the double illusions (Lefebvre, 2009). Equality and democratization will require work, it will require labour – in order to produce a future. This work must happen in actual space, it must be enacted, it cannot only be dreamed of. That is precisely why the concept of praxis is important in the construction of postcolonial. If the people who inhabit space, who are affected by space, are not able to construct said space then they leave it to the construction of others – they leave their fates in the hands of others.

The university gallery is actual space, in the physical sense, where work and labour can occur. In the institutional space, it has access to resources and legitimacy. If the space itself is utilized in a fashion whereby its actors critically influence the spatial code around them, then it is a tool of emancipation. A tool for decoloniality. The frameworks in which the gallery can operate are varied, and we should be mindful of the approaches we use. As I stated before, I don’t believe the university art gallery can operate in the *beyond-reform* framework, but with careful practice and theory, the remaining three frameworks remain open to the project of decolonising the gallery.

Whether a space is decolonised or not still ultimately remains a mystery to me. The presence of global hegemonic capital in most spaces today remains a harrowing thorn to the total project of decolonisation. However, for the local concerns of the distinct space of Gallery University Stellenbosch, the notion of the decolonial will never be poised to begin until the framework of radical reforms is produced. This project ultimately requires a diligent and persistent praxis and connection with the spaces concerned.



## Chapter 4. Research methodology

### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will explain the methodological approach utilized in the paper and consider the ethical implications in the writing of this thesis.

### 4.2 Discourse analysis

This study is written as theoretical research, that in the MA Visual Art (Art Education) course the following: Discourse analysis-, critical theory-, cultural studies- and phenomenology approaches. Discourse analysis is chosen for this research. Discourse analysis is “concerned with language-in-use; that is, how individuals accomplish personal, social, and political projects through language. Discourse analysts argue that language and words, as a system of signs, are in themselves essentially meaningless; it is through the shared, mutually agreed-on use of language that meaning is created. Language both mediates and constructs our understanding of reality” (Starks 2007). This research will also include critical theory (Strydom 2011) which explore and critique social conditions to uncover hidden structures. It includes the social, historical, and ideological structures which produce or limit it. Critical theory “provides the descriptive and normative bases for social inquiry aimed at decreasing domination and increasing freedom in all their forms” (Bohman & James; 2019).

### 4.3 Data collection

The data will consist of analysing accounts regarding the four exhibitions at an institutional gallery in the Western Cape from 2016 to 2017. These accounts include various personal effects and documentation of the nights in question, reflections on conversations with people around the gallery; as well as personal experiences of working, attending as well and serving on the staff of each of the exhibitions.

Some of my notes are from voice recordings or unedited video documentation. The visual diary data will be scanned so that an electronic copy will be available if the originals get lost. The electronic version will be saved on my computer and an external hard drive and a flash disc. I will add a password to all these devices, and it is only me that has access to the information (and possibly my

supervisor). If necessary, the data (the diaries) will be destroyed, and copies deleted after five years. No names of the people whom I had conversations with that was mentioned about what was said, nor will any of the quotes and direct accounts be used in the paper. The data section unpacks a series of events in respect to the theoretical investigation of the Gallery University Stellenbosch space with regards to decolonisation. This analysis of the four events at the gallery cannot be generalised as an objective scientific source. It is a very particular and subjective account. It is to be regarded as a soft inquiry mediated by my viewpoint.

#### **4.4 Ethical considerations**

The data will be gathered from the diaries, social media photographs, written documents, and documented conversations in the diaries. Data will be stored on my computer and will be deleted five years after handing in the thesis. There is no need to mention any names, and all conversations will not be referenced directly but used as a recollection of the events that took place. Greater emphasis will be placed on the philosophical inquiry as stipulated by the literature review to minimize the risks of memory. There is no affiliation to any group or funding in the writing of this thesis. This thesis is aimed towards exploratory problem solving and is not intended to harm or discredit any institutions or people. It should also be stated that I have worked inside the institution as an artist, technician, and research assistant. I acknowledge the influence this may have on the discussion, but it is also the motivation behind the project. I have not done any work with the gallery for much more than one full year.

## CHAPTER 5: Presentation and discussion of data

### 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will present the data regarding the research question

For this part of the thesis, an exhibition is to be understood as any form of a cultural event happening at the gallery. Given that the forms of culture come to inform spaces, in this thesis I will not limit the scope of events to visual exhibitions only. I have chosen these events under the premise of their influence on the space and their impactful insight into what decolonization could mean for such a gallery.

Following the intent set out for this paper, as a retrospective reflection on the intents of decolonization, I will recall some of the events that took place, post student protests, which were guided by concerns of colonization and decolonization. The literary theory of space will be used to create a framework to decipher the implications and effects of such events. Each event also contains examples of education happening within the gallery space, to varying degrees – I will critically discuss the symbolic significance of each.

### 5.2 Description of the exhibitions that took place at GUS.

#### 5.2 Exhibitions that took place at GUS.

##### 5.2.1 Battleground - Charles Bell's Drawings of the War of the Axe, 6 April 2016

Professor Michael Godby curated an unpacking of the contents of the John and Charles Bell Trust collection of colonial sketches and artefacts during the English colonial period in South Africa.

dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century

How was the space used:

Professor Michael Godby curated an unpacking of the contents of the John and Charles Bell Trust collection of colonial sketches and artefacts during the English colonial period in South Africa dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As you walked into the gallery the vast open space of the main hall, felt immediately larger than usual. The view of the wall on the other side some 20 metres away hung three drawings, framed by white borders inside silver ridged frames. To the immediate left were several books produced for the collection which presented the research conducted on

the collection. On the walls to the left and the right held more drawings framed in the same styling, thin ridged silver-like frames which contained time-stained white borders surrounding the colonial drawings of Charles Bell. The drawings depicted still landscapes, battle scenes between English soldiers and native Xhosa tribesmen and maps. The drawings of battle scenes were no larger than 30cm by width or height and were all drawn in a monochrome pen and wash, apart from the maps which were in colour and larger than the rest of the collection. The slightly bigger maps hung on the left wall of the main space, near the door leading to the second and third space of the gallery. The exhibition only made use of the main hall of the gallery with the other two rooms standing empty. The observation deck in the main hall also remained unused for the display. There were around 38 drawings on display.

The drawings were not very clear from afar and the viewer would need to step up close to notice the details of each drawing. Each drawing was made delicately by hand. There was no sound in the room, apart from the ambient noise of the streets outside the gallery and the whirring of the electronics which the space utilized. The space had an eerie stillness to it, and the works inside seemed to match the exterior colonial architecture of the building.

Who attended?

Professor Godby hosted an exhibition opening on the 6<sup>th</sup> of April and a special lunchtime lecture on the work. The exhibition was mostly attended by students and academics. A member of staff who oversaw the day-to-day running of the gallery described the response as quiet and limited, reporting numbers between 20-30 at the opening and a larger group of students were brought from the art department on the day of visiting artist talk. The exhibition opening was predominantly attended by the academic community. The lunchtime talk lasted an hour and after asking my fellow students about their responses, the responses ranged from interested to nonchalance. Upon the de-installation of the exhibition, I asked the same member of staff how the public walking in responded to the exhibition. She stated that the impact was not noticeable from walk-in viewers with most not staying for longer than 15min and very few opening the books on display.

What was produced?

The exhibition happened in the aftermath of the student riots across the country.

The overseer of the Charles Bell collection, Professor Michael Godby, set out with the intent to facilitate the discussion of the role of the colonial archive in the wake of the student movement #FEESMUSTFALL. The exhibition intended to showcase the work of Charles Bell, created during his time spent employed in the British colonial occupation of South Africa. The works were largely used as propaganda at the time and facilitated the expansion of British territory in South Africa and were used to justify the action taken against the tribes of South Africa. The research conducted by Professor Michael Godby exposed the discrepancies in Bell's drawing. The exhibition also offered the opportunity to engage with archived work that would otherwise be locked away in archival protection. The exhibition also set out to consider how we engage with the technical aspects of the work. Investigating whether we can still consider the aesthetic qualities despite its historical inaccuracies. It also called into question the role of such colonial archives in the retrospective analysis of African history.

### 5.2.2 Madosini and Found at Sea Live – 3 August 2017

Madonsini is a world-renowned traditional Xhosa performer who specializes in the Umrhubhe (Bow). She has a legacy as being one of the great traditional musicians in South Africa. Her performance was received with great anticipation and reverie. *Found at Sea* are composed of two grandchildren of Madosini and accompanying musicians who were taught to play traditional musical instruments by Madosini. There was no entrance fee to the event as the event was sponsored by the Stellenbosch Outdoor Sculpture Trust.

How the space was used.

The main hall of the gallery was lined with chairs and the musicians were placed on the small stage that stood at the rear end of the hall. Because the gallery had started as a church, the acoustics of the architecture were well utilized, and the clarity of the performance gave it a rich, mesmerizing sound.

Madosini performed in, what I can only describe as traditional Xhosa attire, the rest of the performers were wearing everyday western-styled clothing items, while the two female vocalists had their faces lightly painted. They were performing on a rug placed on a slightly raised stage, originally built to host the preacher during sermons in the old church. There was a stage crew that aided with the setup of the mics and mixing board during the performance.

Who attended?

The gallery was filled with significant numbers of seated and standing guests. The demographic was varied in ethnicity and age. The event attracted predominantly: students, musicians, academics; and less significantly: passers. Many people also made the journey from neighbouring towns to witness the event.

What was produced?

That night, the gallery was filled with sounds from African traditional instruments mixing with double bass played by one of the members of *Found at Sea*. The music was an arrangement of a double bass riff and traditional African rhythms, played on a variety of instruments (uHadi, African Flute, etc). Madosini was given time to perform solo. Two members of *Found at Sea* provided English translations of the stories Madosini was telling in Xhosa. The stories were about her life, her music, stories of struggle icons, the significance of each instrument, etc. When Madosini spoke, she brought laughter to those who could understand Xhosa. She spoke with a commanding tone, eliciting responses to those who could engage – getting audience members to shout back responses. After every song, they were met with cheers, applause, and ululations.

### 5.2.2 African Rhythms – 21 September 2017

The spatial practice of the art gallery has changed significantly as the discourse of art history has developed into far-reaching territories of action. As such, it is not out of the question that the gallery can function as a site for various cultural interventions. African Rhythm featured as the third instalment of the “Stellies Jazz Experiment” series.

While spatial practice as defined by Lefebvre generally denotes a cumulative view of landscapes, encompassing the city space and constituents, I am taking its discontents and applying it to a building in a specific space and time. To do this I will start by unpacking what space was produced.

How was the space used?

Throughout the day, people were coming in and out of the gallery to set up in the third wing of the gallery, as the rest of the gallery was in use for another exhibition. Seating arrangements were made to accommodate the guests who would arrive, but there was not enough sitting place by the time the performance started, and many guests were left standing. Before the performance, free wine and snacks were served and the space was filled with the sounds of old records and conversation. Attendees were free to move into the next space of the gallery which still hosted some of the works of the exhibition. On the back wall of the performance space, there were also work still on display.

Who attended?

Many people were circulating the room engaged in conversations. The event was attended by people from various ethnic backgrounds, but the majority had ties to the university – as students, professors, and various non-academic staff. Fewer in number were the people who travelled from neighbouring cities and non-university affiliated members of the local community. Access to the performance was free, with anyone from the street being able to walk in, this was exemplified by a few local homeless people coming into the gallery unchecked – sadly this lasted until the very end when they were asked to leave due to the fact, they were heavily inebriated and exposing themselves at the event. The event was sponsored by the *Alliance Française Stellenbosch, Africa Open Institute of Music and ConcertsSA*. This is an excerpt from the press release statement made for the event:

“About the Stellies Jazz Experiment: The series is an initiative of Gallery University Stellenbosch (GUS) – exploring the possibility of turning the white cube into a multi-disciplinary social hub – with pop-up live music happenings. In addition to the live performances, the musicians engage in

an open conversation with the audience.” (*11 musicians bring African Rhythm to Stellenbosch*, 2017)

What was produced?

The performance started close to 8 pm that night and continued just past 10 pm. The group of 11 musicians, performed in live music in the style of Kwaito, Afro-pop, Afro-Soul and Tribal House. – a blend of traditional African tempos synthesized by contemporary popular electronic music with lyrics laid over the beat. They played traditional African instruments with flute and trumpet accompaniment. The lead singer sang in traditional African languages composed predominantly of Tswana. Their dress style can also be considered eclectic, reminiscent of early South African Jazz pioneers like Hugh Masakela dress of blazers, pants, formal shoes, and hats.

At the beginning of the performance, it was clear that the group was going to bring new energy to the space. The rhythms they produced moved people from their seats and by the end of the night, they had surpassed the expectations previously held of what the performance would be – with many attendees expecting a “traditional jazz experience”.

#### 5.2.4 Press/release group exhibition. 3-27 October 2017

An excerpt from the press release for the exhibition read as follows:”

*“As an educative tool, printmaking has historically and in its present form produced many thought-provoking narratives in a South African cultural and visual landscape where ideas of exchange and collaboration are brought to the fore as well as questioned. This exhibition is an intergenerational celebration of such printmaking in South Africa. The body of work presented in this exhibition intends to create an environment where printmakers, educators, artists, and students/learners alike are given the opportunity to express themselves through various printmaking disciplines. With an intergenerational approach, the exhibition intends to open up a dialogue surrounding the various ways in which printmaking is used in South Africa”.*

*(<https://www.facebook.com/events/118786932138807/>)*

Black Ink. Collective is a collective of printmakers, artists and educators based in and around the Stellenbosch area, they aim to utilize art making and pedagogy as a means to create a positive impact in the community. They also wish to create a link between the university and the community to foster the community responsibility of the university art department. Their



particular focus was on printmaking. The artworks of the exhibition are the outcome of various workshops in which participants explored screen printing, stencilling and papermaking techniques through personal narratives.

The Nyanga Arts Printmaking workshop (nicknamed "Young Blood" by the participants) is a young collective that stemmed out of the Tupelo workshops held at Nyanga Arts Centre. Two artists, Velile Soha and Ledelle Moe coordinated the workshops in the hope of fostering an ongoing interaction with the community and developing a space of self-expression and learning for the students involved. A group of artists: Abongile, Nomusa Mtshali and Charles Palm assisted in the classes bringing their unique creative insights as artists to the workshops.

Various other artists were invited to participate in the event but had to submit work that involved the printmaking process, as that was the central theme that emerged through the exhibition.

How was the space used?

The space was used to display various formats of printmaking, but eclectic. The artworks were produced by an intergeneration group of artmakers, some of which were well-recognized artists in the media, while others were school students from spaces such as Nyanga, Cloetesville and Kayamandi in the Western Cape.

An opening was held on Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> October which featured a small introduction by the curator Stephanie Conradie.

Who attended?

Unlike the bursting capacities witnessed during the Madosini performance or the African Rhythm performance, this event was modestly attended. What made it unique was the number of young students (under 18 years) who attended. An ethnically diverse and intergenerational crowd

attended, composed of young children artists, community members and friends of artists, staff members of the university, parents, artists, alumni and university students.

What was produced?

The space featured works by numerous people from different demographics, producing a narrative that was varied in its subject matter and therefore, narratives. The entirety of the gallery was used, with all four spaces containing artworks from the participating artists. The outside quadrangle was used to serve food and beverages.

From an experiential point of view the way the work was displayed could be described as a traditional art exhibition, by which I mean: displayed on the wall. The reading of the work took place by the visual assessment of each subjective perspective in the room. There were bean bags placed in the middle of the space and lunch was provided for the youth that attended. Children as young as 4 were playing in the space, jumping on the bean bags and looking at the art with their friends. Older scholars were talking, looking, and taking photos with their phones. The curator and other senior members of staff gave an introduction and short speech about the event.

### 5.3 Themes that emerged from the four exhibitions and interventions.

#### 5.3.1 Spatial Practice: Changing the perception of the Gallery.

“What is spatial practice neo-capitalism? It embodies a close association, within perceived space, between daily reality (daily routine) and urban reality (the routes and networks which link up the places set aside for work, ‘private life’ and leisure) ... A spatial practice must have a certain cohesiveness, but this does not imply it is coherent” (Lefebvre, 38: 1991)

Lefebvre’s writes on spatial practice that it accounts for *perceived* space, which warrants that it is concerned with the body’s interaction with space through the senses but also how that information is understood through cognitive mediation of social practice. (Lefebvre 1991)

In this section, I will apply an understanding of the spatial practice to define key themes which emerge during the intervention which took place in the gallery space about the framework of Andreotti, Stein and Ahenakew & Hunt presented in the literature review section of this paper.

If we are to analyse the spatial practice of the gallery space, we must also consider the networks which govern the interaction with the space. The effects of the city planning and ownership of land constructed by the colonial period and apartheid still govern our spaces today. The gallery sits in such a location, in the centre of town, previously demarcated as a white-only area and now functioning as the central business area of the town. As such the palimpsest of alienation persists in the space.

If we consider that the gallery in question is a national heritage site of colonialism that was built during colonialism and was considered a “whites-only” space during apartheid, then you could make the argument that the gallery is now “decolonised”. Yet this is a flawed presupposition, that falls directly into the first category defined by Andreotti, Stein and Ahenakew & Hunt, namely: the “everything is awesome” space. The underlying implications of long-standing power relations are ignored.

Furthermore, the spatial code of art practice, how it is produced or reproduced, is an exclusive one governed by the laws of neo-capitalism. To clarify this statement, allow me to cite Eyal Danon writing about the efforts of decolonisation at the Israeli Center for Digital Art:

*“It took us time to understand that even when the content of our activities is fundamentally socio-political – even we promote projects that and exhibitions engaging with current socio-political issues that field, from working with artists to mounting exhibitions and publishing catalogues, preserves the field’s existing conservative divisions and boundaries”* (Danon in *OnCurating*: Dec 2007, pg. 26).

That is to say that the practice of art-making in the contemporary field, however socio-political or relevant, is still coded by the nuances of the academic metanarratives in the field. Danon goes on to state that their adoption of the role of an art centre alone, only furthers the separation between themselves and the community – “the language of art on the one hand, and the aesthetics of clean, white art spaces on the other, are not neutral tools for the ‘correct’

presentation of an artwork, but first and foremost a means for effective screening of anyone who does not speak or understand the language.” (Danon in *OnCurating*: Dec 2007, pg. 26). This kind of space is relevant to academic pursuit and investigation, yet in the framework of decolonisation, this perception of the gallery only hinders the redistribution of cultural agency post-colony/post-apartheid. This “identity crisis” as to the role of a university gallery is an important one because as an academic institution attached to the university it functions as a space for critical engagement with the interventions which take place within its walls yet at the same time must focus on community engagement.

This paradox plays itself out in the Battleground exhibition held on the 6<sup>th</sup> of April 2016. The works themselves did not particularly play into popular art practices, the dated drawings hung up on the walls in a very modern fashion – static on white walls, lying in wait for the viewer to consider their place. Without an academic context and explanation of the works, the intent of the exhibition becomes ambiguous. A series of colonial drawings, inside a colonial building, create a space that is akin to a museum collection – which reinforces the exclusive nature of art in South Africa. This is not to say that this practice holds no place in the discussion of decolonizing institutions. Quite the opposite, it is extremely important. Questioning what the role of these archives holds within the context of decolonial spaces. As an academic pursuit, the exhibition serves as a conduit for the discussion, yet outside of this engagement, this approach limits itself dramatically to engagement and perception of the greater community outside of the academic art community. The experience is so heavily coded by the hegemonic discourse of art theory – that without proper access to an extensive vocabulary of art theory a misreading of the exhibition is like to occur. In theory, it holds that interventions are of vital importance in navigating the shared history of our cultural identity – yet can we begin to understand the shared concerns if the engagement with these questions themselves are not shared? What is produced and reproduced, through the example shown to students of the arts, is the exclusive nature of art discourse. This is not owed only to the history education in our country but also a discerned disinterest of the public in these matters.

These concerns are important to understand the dynamics of social spaces, particularly when gazing through a scope of decolonizing spaces. While I can assert that during this period of interactions, the administration of the gallery was concerned with the decolonization of the space, evident by the official statements issued and the directive set out by the curators, department representatives and the rector of the university. Yet Ideology, alone, cannot produce social space.

(Lefebvre 1991).

Space is constructed by the complex relationship between the hegemonic forces and by the people that inhabit that space. By inviting greater interaction with the space, we can more clearly define a space that is produced by as well produces its actors.

The two interventions which showed the highest number of attendees formed out of the most diverse demographic were the two performances of the “The Jazz Experiment series”, namely: Madosini & Lost at Sea, and the performance of African Rhythm. The successful turnout of these two events was owed to the intention set forth by the curator at the time who said in an interview with Matiemedia “...jazz allows the meeting of people from different backgrounds. Jazz is all about ‘social cohesion’ (*Jazz evening brings people together in Stellenbosch* Matiemedia 12 May 2017). The space was conceived to operate as grounds for people to come together because it was based around something that was accessible and relevant to a greater community. This strategy is not without its shortfalls, however. For one, it was costly and required the investment of time, resources, and labour, yet the realization of the event is based on how relevant the interaction is to the greater community. People were willing to sacrifice their time and resources because they believed the intervention was relevant to them. This interaction between people of varying backgrounds is imperative in addressing problems of social representation.

The press/release exhibition took on a completely different strategy, while still serving the needs of the community, the institution and decolonial education. Here the gallery served as a platform for exposure to young artists. The event sought to expose young scholars to the practice of participating in an exhibition of their artworks amongst recognized artists. This invites children and supporters to participate in an exhibition in a space they scarcely get a chance to interact with. For these kinds of interventions to happen, it requires an unyielding commitment to the artist-educators involved. Through the foundation laid by their efforts for education over months if not years, a network is created through which these voices can be heard inside the gallery space. The reliance on a greater network of institutions, like Thupelo and Black Ink., is essential. Providing this interaction for young children is essential to disrupting the stigma of the gallery as a space reserved for the privileged. The concern lies more with its participants rather than those that walk in – by inviting those disenfranchised by the colonial discourse to actively participate in the

production and display we inherently foster the development of a decolonial space through authorship and ownership of cultural interaction.

## Theme 2. Representation of space and representational spaces?

*“In order to set our institutions firmly on the path of future knowledges, we need to reinvent a classroom without walls in which we are all colearners; a university that is capable of convening various publics in new forms of assemblies that become points of convergence of and platforms for the redistribution of different kinds of knowledges.”*  
(Mbembe, 2015)

The epistemological concern of decolonization is not new, rather it has been a concern of African philosophers for centuries. It sits at the very core of redefining African philosophy against the colonial groupings and ethnology set forth by the colonial encounter with the other. (Kebede 2004). A key theme of this struggle to propel African knowledge is the protection and promotion of indigenous knowledge systems to undo the damage already done by modern colonial domination globally. The topic of decolonization of Higher Education in South Africa is nothing new. The 1997 Act and White Paper sought to emphasize the “production, acquisition and application of new knowledge” and “contribute to the creation, sharing and evaluation of knowledge” (Badat 2010). Yet the student uprisings of 2015/16 gave rise to a report of lived experiences that did not measure up to the national directive set out by the White Paper. Art education and the gallery space is no exception to this uneasy reality.

*“There seems to be a disjuncture in institutions like Johannesburg Art Gallery (JAG), Wits Art Museum (WAM), and Hector Peterson Museum (HPM), ... and the ways in which they form part of the social and cultural fabric of what formulates South Africa’s artistic and cultural national identity.”* (Mabaso in Kolb & Richter, 2017).

We must consider with a critical outlook, the knowledge systems which exist in gallery spaces and how it inserts coded meaning into the space. In light of this, I will look at the exhibition outlined above, consider their representation of space and how it ties into the representational space. I will start by unpacking what art was produced and its symbolic significance for knowledge production.

The battlegrounds exhibition displayed several drawings from the colonial period by Charles Bell. The exhibition held several drawings which were monochrome depictions of the 7<sup>th</sup> Frontier War

of 1846 also called the Battle of the Axe as it was ignited by the theft of an axe from a colonial trade post. The exhibition was accompanied by a book that outlines the history and documentation of the event, the life of Charles Bells and his works, and the discussion of colonial history in a contemporary context of post-colony South Africa.

These drawings were made from what one could call the 'settler perspective'. (Tuck and Yang 2012). It is to say it is positioned from the perspective of the colonial white slave-owner. The historical concerns of the depictions are laden with the battle scenes, landscapes, and the retelling of the colonial history of Africa. Furthermore, Professor Godby unpacks the mythology of the event and exposes its production as propaganda through his research,

*"However, as Godby illustrates, Bell's interpretation of the war was in fact highly partial, and his drawings served as propaganda that sought to justify the dispossession and subjugation of the African populations neighbouring the Cape Colony; a project that Bell was himself complicit in through his role as a surveyor who adjudicated settler claims to land" (Corrigall 2017).*

Essentially the project sought to demystify African history as told through white colonial men and the supporting booklet does go on to include contemporary South African art which sought to reclaim the subject matter of Bell's drawing, such as land and identity. What Professor Godby cleverly does is present the drawings as they are and awaits the viewers' engagement then unravels the viewer perception through literature – this is evident in the challenge he issues inside the book.

*"The first challenge, obviously, is to those who continue to regard Bell's work – in these war drawings and elsewhere – as an objective record of events: no image can ever be entirely objective and the saturation of his work by contemporary racial ideology, amongst other obvious prejudices, should show that it was, in its way, propaganda." (Godby, 2015).*

Yet there remains something unsettling about the body of work and why it is given such precedence in a platform in the gallery. Sean O' Toole writes very briefly in his observation of the work at the Grahamstown art festival: "Speaking of men in uniform, art historian Michael Godby's 'Battleground' can look misleading, especially if you only poke your head into the annex of the Albany History Museum hosting this scrupulously researched historical show." (O' Toole, 2017).

By the time of the exhibition, the student mobilisation for #FEESMUSTFALL was waning, and the demands of the movement were scarcely met. I remember feeling uneasy about my involvement with this exhibition. As such it remains quite vividly in my memory. The exhibition was not easy to

process in the context of the events that unfolded months before the opening night. This was in part due to the curatorial choices made. The exhibition centred on Charles Bell and his story – without inviting the treatment of non-settler perspectives on the narratives contained.

To step into the gallery, an old Lutheran church standing as a symbol of colonial time and see a collection of colonial drawings hanging on display after countless protests were made concerning the overt depiction of colonial symbolism in the greater space – was by no means a desirable course to take. It is only in retrospect that these observations could be made. From an educational standpoint, the exhibition is warranted as an exercise in unpacking the discontents and nuances of colonial history and its disposition within the common, but not shared, history of South Africa (Mbembe cited in Godby, 2005). Yet the symbolic gesture of providing the platform to express the telling of African history from the colonizers' standpoint does give rise to scepticism from the viewer. What does it communicate about the space and the project? Furthermore, the symbolism of the gallery as a space that welcomes its identity as a colonial heritage site is only further reinforced. From an academic standpoint, this emphasizes the questions of colonial symbolisms not only of the work but also of the building itself – though, the nuances of this relationship between the monumentalizing of the drawings and the building can easily be overlooked because of its day-to-day operation and the buildings which surround it.

These discussions must be held to properly understand the role of the gallery, the concern lies with how we put these conversations into practice to avoid the alienation of the greater community and gain greater insight from a greater sample of African identity. In a town that hosts, monuments of colonial figures on almost every street of the central business district, or museums hosting enormous colonial collections, or the colonial portraits hanging from the walls of people homes: just how much relevance does an exhibition of colonial prints hold inside a town already saturated with this kind of iconography? How much insight does it provide to the daily lived experience of its inhabitants? How does it add to an already prevalent question of colonial belonging in the post colony? The time has come to decentre these conversations around the settler perspective. Rather than alienate and consider it in isolation we need to consider it from an indigenous perspective in dialogue with the colonial other. Have indigenous voices not been silenced enough in our long-standing history? I would like to emphasize again that colonial belonging is a very important topic, but to place the concerns of settler perspective has been



overdone. Indigenous voices need the platform now and the conversation of settler perspectives of this nature need to be considered with a recognition of their voices.

The two performances of the “Stellies Jazz Experiment” series, both utilized native African indigenous languages, instruments, and rhythms. Sometimes, the performance of Madosini was provided with English translations and stories by the vocalists of *Found at Sea*, who were also related to Madosini. They spent some time explaining the life and routine of Madosini in the Eastern Cape. The description and underlying story were translated for some of the songs. The journey of the members of *Found at Sea*, learning how to play Umrhubhe and other African instruments under Madosini were described. Yet there was so much left untranslated, especially when the stage was left to Madosini herself. The experience was spiritual, which seemed appropriate considering Madosini is an African healer. The experience left a profound impact on the attendees. By hosting something so rooted in indigenous culture, vastly different from the history of the location and town. The melodies of the Umrhubhe resonated in the acoustics of the church – a symbolic gesture of coming together of two worlds to create something powerful. By centring this experience, without an attempt to author or curate the experience, on the indigenous roles of culture within the context of the shared lived experience they educated the audience. It became a platform for indigenous knowledge exchange, which through the medium of music, became so much more impactful and memorable. The significance of Madosini’s music is known worldwide, but many of the attendees had only learned of her that night. Our knowledge is coded within locale and language, thus inviting Madosini into the space offered the audience members a unique opportunity to engage with her narratives from a traditional African perspective within their local space. At the time this was a rare opportunity for this type of cultural exchange within the greater Stellenbosch. Without centring these indigenous narratives inside the gallery space, the gallery will never be in a state of becoming decolonized.

The performance of African Rhythm took a different approach and communicated a different kind of knowledge. While still rooted in the use of African traditional instrumentation and musical stylings – it sought to educate the audience on how traditional roots are amalgamated and

understood by the musicians through a contemporary scope. The dress, music and dancing, eclectic by, joined together to create a new configuration of knowledge based on the old but welcoming the integration of the new. What the audience was ultimately exposed to be the vision of how the youth is producing their narratives in the cultural spaces of South Africa that few attending that night would be privy to before. This kind of creative reimagination is crucial to piloting the way forward for the collective navigation of post-colony/apartheid South Africa. While the music was not political at all, it held an underlying message which I can only translate as “Come dance with me!”. Albie Sachs, in his paper prepared for the in-house seminar of ANC, *Preparing ourselves for freedom* (1990) wrote this about the popular musical cultural icons of South Africa:

*“No one told Hugh or Abdullah to write their music in this or that way, to be progressive or committed, to introduce humour or gaiety or a strong beat so as to be optimistic. Their music conveys genuine confidence because it springs from inside the personality and experience of each of them, from popular tradition and the sounds of contemporary life; we respond to it because it tells us something lovely and vivacious about ourselves, not because the lyrics are about how to win a strike or blow up a petrol dump. It bypasses, overwhelms, ignores apartheid, establishes its own space.” (Sachs 1990).*

While Albie Sachs asserts that politics should be removed from cultural production, I disagree, and state that all knowledge, whether cultural or not, is political (Derrida, 2003). Space is a political construct and the interplay within it is political. (Lefebvre 1991). The politics and knowledge of the performance that night constructed a politics of belonging. It facilitated a cultural exchange within the space, that welcomed all its viewers into the fold. There can be many criticisms made from the sphere of decolonial thinkers about this kind of pluralism, but I believe that decolonization will not come to fruition without a political message of solidarity with one another. To cite Gatzmbide-Fernandez, the event proffered a kind of *pedagogy of solidarity*. The coming together of two worlds and their spaces in a sort of treaty.

*“Creative solidarity is concerned with the multiplicity of cultural practices that might evolve in such encounters, as a way of countering the version of ‘culture’ and ‘identity’ that are imposed by the colonial projects of modernity.... Creative solidarity works to reveal new horizons, against which we might not only imagine, but also produce new ways of being together.” (Gatzmbide-Fernandez 2012)*

Welcoming these interventions into the space will facilitate a deeper understanding of African history and African identity becoming. Although vastly different in nature and effect, both

performances brought out a reverie for the cultural production of African peoples. It was an educational experience, exposing attendees to fresh perspectives on African cultural history and its influence on the youth. While Madosini has long been heralded as the queen of traditional Xhosa music, her status as such, was in full display in a town which is still under the influence of the hegemonic constructs of coloniality and capitalism. These artists utilized the platform to share their cultural relationship with their land and community.

The final exhibition I would like to discuss with regards to representation of spaces and representation of space is the Press/Release exhibition. This exhibition consisted of a very wider array of motifs and print mediums. Screen-prints on clothing and handmade paper, monotypes, hand and digital prints of photography, lithography, etc. The exhibition was centred around the theme of printmaking, but the content was unrestricted. Established artists exhibited alongside students from the university and scholars who participated in the workshops of the Thupelo initiative from Nyanga and Black Ink. from Stellenbosch. The images depicted ranged from pictorial lightning bolts to hidden political discourse encoded in screen-printed photographs on old uniforms of Cape Carnival Troops. Students and established artists alike could submit content that concerned their practice. The content was extremely varied and unpacking each work is too great a task for the intent of this thesis. Instead, I would like to focus on the relationship of the exhibition to meaning-making practices within the gallery. The actualization of the exhibition is a vitally important resistance to the hegemonic traditions of the institution of the art market.

## Chapter 6. Conclusion and implications

### Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss the conclusions and implications of the findings presented in this thesis.

### 6.2 Conclusions drawn from the findings and implications

I'd like to start by stating that while there were many hours spent, years, spent on the research and production of this paper – both in practice and theory - this document by no means, a conclusive response to the research question, namely: defining what a decolonised gallery is or how it should operate. There are many aspects of the theory of decolonisation that were skipped or remain unresearched, that would need to be developed for future considerations. Considering this, I'd like to cite Richter and Kolb's assertion on decolonising spaces: "De-colonizing is thought to be on the horizon, in the way Derrida spoke about democracy to come. De-colonizing Art institutions can only be a shared project, with different tasks in each geopolitical and social context." (Richter & Golb, 2017). The conclusions below are not new information for the academy or the gallery space. With one look at the GUS website, you can find traces of the strategies contained within my conclusion, as such, I only end up emphasizing the importance of these strategies. With this in mind, I will proceed to the conclusions on the practice of decolonisation within the concerned gallery space.

#### 6.2.1 Community Interaction

Community engagement is a vital aspect of the responsibilities held within the university and subsequently must be upheld in the gallery space. As an educational institute, there exists a national mandate for greater community development. Furthermore, the relevance and development of art practices themselves depend on community involvement. For the gallery to flourish so too must the community surrounding it. That is not to say that the gallery is responsible for the financial wellbeing of the citizens of Stellenbosch, however, access to resources and educational programmes should be emphasized to inspire a community of belonging. The discourse of apartheid has disenfranchised many of the citizens in the location. GUS as a site (both as an extension of the university and actual location) which greatly benefited in its development

during apartheid there remains an ethical imperative to being an active member of the re-empowering citizens. Furthermore, the privatisation of art and the resounding scaling down of art education must also be undermined through teaching young disenfranchised citizens. Otherwise, the relevance and quality of art practise will only grow weaker. Partnering with schools and non-government organizations will strengthen this cause. The press/release exhibition is a good example of this.

### **6.2.2 Language, exposure in and to the space, and new narratives**

While community interaction remains important, I believe that the gallery should maintain its interaction with artists and organizations that are not local. I would champion further-reaching exchanges with remote locations in South Africa. One of the most humbling and eye-opening experiences of my life came from the Madosini performance. I was completely entranced by the performance and the vivid beauty of its message. I vividly remember sitting in on the performance and thinking about the lack of initiative I put forth in understanding indigenous cultural practice in South Africa, simply because I felt that it was not my place to do so as a non-Xhosa. This was an ignorant and foolish assumption because it had me questioning my identity as a South African citizen in spaces where I did not feel comfortable. More inroads such as these should be made to discover and invite interactions between cultures. We need to pay respect to the indigenous cultures and knowledge systems of our land.

This includes hosting indigenous speakers and dismantling the construct of the as a space of Afrikaners. Now when I assert this, I do not mean that the space should rid itself of the exposure of Afrikaans culture, but what I do mean is that positioning the gallery as an Afrikaner space is limiting the heights it can rise to. No person in the gallery should be interrupted for not speaking in the right language from the wrong culture, rather we should be curating experiences that cross-cultural borders. That will only come from actively seeking voices outside our comfort zone as local citizens and representatives of the institution.

I would even go so far as to say that the gallery should undermine its status as a heritage site. There needs to be a commitment to defining itself outside the constructs of the Stellenbosch hegemonic institution – this will be one of the biggest challenges to the decolonization of the space as the institution owns and funds the space. Navigating the bureaucracy and resistance to

change has for a long time, been one of the major factors limiting the actors for social change in the space. Yet once again if it is accomplished it will not only serve to produce more interesting work it will also improve the standing of the gallery within a national context of art institutions.

### **6.2.3 Undermining the hegemonic influence of art academia.**

This hegemonic notion of knowledge production has generated discursive scientific practices and has set up interpretive frames that make it difficult to think outside of these frames (Mbembe, 2015)

The gallery must champion a wider cultural practice that is not so dependent on the academic community. That is not to say, it should be less academic. I want to assert that it should be more academic, treating the space as a place of experimentation, data collection and research for the cultural exchanges in the area. This will require greater planning, engagement, documentation, and participation from the parties involved. There should be fewer confines on what constitutes an appropriate art practice and greater observation on the effects these interactions will have on the surrounding communities and the spatial code of the space. If we are to decolonise the gallery space, then we need to allow breathing room for new interactions to occur. This is a difficult task and it is not straightforward. I cannot explain the process to achieve a more open attitude towards what constitutes new cultural exchanges within the gallery space, but the overprotection of the space will only serve to alienate possibilities. One strategy that is already in motion within the space, is cross-disciplinary practice and collaboration. Yet these collaborations should not be limited to the field of academia.

This ties both into greater community engagement and the quest for new narratives.

### **6.2.3 The archive**

I will finish with what I believe to be the most important conclusion of all: the gallery needs an extensive archive so a timeline can be plotted to gauge, investigate, and implement changes within the space. This archive needs to be accessible, comprehensive, and easy to use. One of the strategies that invited the most fruitful and complex discursive points during my thesis was the work of Professor Godby in maintaining and utilizing the archive in the gallery space, yet the event

itself was not very well documented. To critically engage with the gallery a more conclusive record keeping needs to be made accessible to protect and extend the development of the space into something impactful in academia and the greater scope of its interactions within South African art history. We have access to so many technologies to facilitate this kind of archive.

### 6.3 Contribution to the field of research

I do not anticipate that this thesis will change quintessential opinions of galleries within institutions. This thesis is intended to accomplish is to provide minor documentation into the history and critical outlook on the transformation practices during my time working with the gallery and within the frameworks of decolonisation. My hope is for this thesis to be a starting point, or reference for compa

rison in the future, for further research. What it has accomplished is but a small fraction of what needs to be accomplished for documentation and reflection required to form a strong academic inquiry. It is vital that institutions that control art galleries critically reflect in practice and purpose. This is how we achieve praxis within social spaces.

*“Effective democracy can always be measured to this criterion: the participation in and the access to the archive, its constitution, and its interpretation” (Derrida, 2003: 4).*

### 6.4 Further research and critique of the research

This thesis has numerous shortfalls. The methodology leaves much to be desired. A more thorough series of interviews and reading of the events needs to be investigated if any further research of this nature is to be carried. I could only offer my perspective, and the second-hand perspective of others told through my observations and notes. This does not provide an optimum data set required for an enquiry of space, but it does, by the very least, engage in critical reflection of practice. Lefebvre asserts that the spatial code of every given space is dependent on the subject of the space and is by no means, comprehensive or clear – even when we consider all the subjects

together. (Lefebvre 1999). Different theories, other than Lefebvre need to be utilized in mapping the social space.

Furthermore, a greater scope of social space needs to be applied, the gallery should be contextualized within the greater area and be considered as to how it functions within in said area, this will help illuminate the hegemonic trends of the area. More documentation is required going further with regards to analysing the impact of exhibitions, this involves using quantitative data to get a good understanding of the metrics of the space. By using these metrics we may analyse the trends concerning a critical engagement with the social aspects of the space. This could open another avenue of methodology.

## 6.5 Concluding remarks.

The concept of this paper was drawn from a very long process of engaging in a critical reflection on the workspaces inside the gallery I was directly involved in from 2016 to 2017. During that time, and prior, the unfolding of the discourse of decolonisation finally gained significant traction in the academic space. Much of it was owed to the events and involvement of #FEESMUSTFALL, but there was also a pervasive aspect that took a long-time digest and discuss. This led the process of this thesis to be in a constant state of retrospection and introspection. None of these exhibitions can be said to encompass the entirety of complexity that is decolonisation and what it should mean for the practices of an art gallery. From reading countless articles on the topic of decolonisation, the gallery and museum space, art theory, a lengthy investigation of African philosophy, anti-capitalist literature and retrospective analysis to the work which was done in the spirit of it all – I can confidently say, that while I feel more informed about the topic, I am not even close to encapsulating the scope of decolonial theory in the art. There is still so much work to be done. As such I would like to assert that this thesis is not a best practice guide, or a critique of cultural practice – rather an exploration into concerns of the Gallery, the university and Stellenbosch.



## References

- Abrahamsson, K.V 1999. *Landscapes lost and gained: On changes in semiotic resources*. Human Ecology Review, Vol 6, No 2. P51-61 1999. Accessed at <http://www.humanecologyreview.org/pastissues/hToer62/62abrahamsson.pdf> [Online]
- Ajayi, J. F. Ade.; Goma, L. K. H.; Johnson, Ampah G. 1996. *The African Experience with higher education*. Ohio University Press.
- Allsup, RE. 2003. *Praxis and the Possible: Thoughts on the Writings of Maxine Greene and Paulo Freire*. Philosophy of Music Education Review, 11(2): 157-169. [Online] @ SunLearn
- Andreotti, V.d O; Stein, S; Ahenakew, C & Hunt, D. 2015. Mapping interpretations of decolonization in the context of higher education in *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society*. Vol 4, No1, 2015. Pp21-40 [Online].
- Adhikari, Mohamed (2013). *Burdened by race: Coloured identities in southern Africa*. UCT Press: Cape Town
- Ball, T (ed). 1977. *Political theory and praxis: new perspectives*. University of Minnesota Press
- Beal, M.A. 1998. *Apartheid and University Education*. PhD thesis of the Faculty of Arts, Philosophy, The University of Witwatersrand [Online]
- Berger, P. L. and T. Luchman. 1966. *Social Construction of Reality*, New York: Doubleday.
- Bohman, James, "Critical Theory", The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2021 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), forthcoming URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2021/entries/critical-theory/>.
- Cook, H. and Fransen, M.A. 1980. *The Old Buildings of the Cape: A Survey and Description of Old Buildings in the Western Province*. Balkema, Cape Town.
- Costandius, E. & Alexander, N., 2019, *Exploring shame and pedagogies of discomfort in critical citizenship education*, Transformation in Higher Education 4(0), a73. <https://doi.org/10.4102/the.v4i0.73>
- De Kok, I & Press, K. 1990. *Spring is rebellious: Arguments about cultural freedom by Albie Sachs and respondents*. Buchu Books, South Africa

- Derrida, J. (2003). *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*.in *Diacritics*; Summer 1995; Vol 25, No. 2 pg 9-63. John Hopkins University Press. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/465144> [online].
- De Waal, L. (2005). The art collection of the University Museum, University of Stellenbosch. *De Arte*, 60-66.
- Donaldson, R. 2021. *Human Geographies of Stellenbosch: Transforming Space, Preserving Place?*. Sun Media, Stellenbosch. South Africa.
- Gaztambide-Fernández, R. (2012). Decolonization and the pedagogy of solidarity. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1(1), 41-67.
- Greider, Thomas & Garkovich, Lorraine. (1994). Landscapes: The Social Construction of Nature and the Environment. *Rural Sociology*. 59. 1 - 24. 10.1111/j.1549-0831.1994.tb00519.x. <  
[https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Lorraine-Garkovich/publication/227705371\\_Landscapes\\_The\\_Social\\_Construction\\_of\\_Nature\\_and\\_the\\_Environment/links/5c5b961292851c48a9bfd112/Landscapes-The-Social-Construction-of-Nature-and-the-Environment.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Lorraine-Garkovich/publication/227705371_Landscapes_The_Social_Construction_of_Nature_and_the_Environment/links/5c5b961292851c48a9bfd112/Landscapes-The-Social-Construction-of-Nature-and-the-Environment.pdf) > [Online]
- Grundeling, A. 2014. "Removal from 'Die Vlakte'". Unpublished memorandum, Stellenbosch University [Online: <http://www.sun.ac.za/english/Documents/Unsorted/Die%20Vlakte%20-%20English.pdf>]
- Hall, S. 2000. Who needs identity? In P. du Gay, J. Evans, and P. Redman (Eds.). *Identity: a reader*. Sage Publications Inc. 15 - 30.
- Hall, T. 2009. Moving and knowing in local space(s). *Qualitative Research*, 9(5):571–585.
- Jaworski, A. and Thurlow, C. 2010. Introducing semiotic landscapes. In A. Jaworski and C. Thurlow (Eds.). *Semiotic landscapes: Language, image, space*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing. 1 - 40.
- Kannemayer, H.A.N. 2010. *Current manifestation of trauma experienced during forced removals under apartheid: interviews with a former "vlakte" inhabitant*. Masters Thesis. Western Cape University, Social Development.
- Kolb, R. and Richter, D. (2017). Issue 35 - *ONCURATING*. [online] On-curating.org. Available at: <http://www.on-curating.org/issue-35.html> [Accessed July. 2018].
- Lefebvre, H. 1991. *The Production of Space*. Basil Blackwell Ltd. Oxford, UK.

- Mbembe, A & Nuttall, S. 2008. *Johannesburg: the elusive metropolis*. Duke University Press. Durhan and London.
- Mbembe, A. 2015. *Decolonizing Knowledge and the Question of the Archive*. Wits University. <  
<https://wiser.wits.ac.za/sites/default/files/private/Achille%20Mbembe%20-%20Decolonizing%20Knowledge%20and%20the%20Question%20of%20the%20Archive.pdf>>  
 [Online]
- Mbembe, A. 2021. *Out of the Dark Night*. Columbia University Press. New York
- Morrow, R. and Torres, C. 2002. *Reading Freire and Habermas: critical pedagogy and transformative social change*. Teachers College Press: New York
- Mulcahy C. M., Mulcahy D. E., and Mulcahy D. G.. 2015. *Pedagogy, praxis and purpose in education*, Routledge: London
- Ndlovu, N.B.E. 2002. *A historical-educational investigation into missionary education in South Africa with special reference to missions schools in Buckenbridge*. Masters Thesis, Education. The University of South Africa. [Online]  
[https://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/2458/dissertation\\_ndlovu\\_nbe.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=3](https://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/2458/dissertation_ndlovu_nbe.pdf?isAllowed=y&sequence=3)
- Odendaal, P.J.L. 2017. *The place where poetries meet: Exploring the contribution of the InZync poetry sessions to sociocultural transformation in Stellenbosch*. Masters Thesis, Philosophy in Sustainable Development, Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences. Stellenbosch University.
- Sium, Desai, Ritskes (2012). Towards the tangible unknown: Decolonization and the Indigenous Future. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*. Vol 1, No.1, 2012. Pp I-XII [Online]
- Smith, M. K. 1999, 2011. 'What is praxis?' *Encyclopaedia of informal education*. Retrieved: 18/05/2016. [Online] URL: <http://www.infed.org/biblio/b-praxis.htm>.
- Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy. Available at: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/critical-theory>.

- Starks, H, Trinidad, SB (2007) Choose your method: a comparison of phenomenology, discourse analysis, and grounded theory. *Qualitative Health Research* 17(10): 1372–1380.  
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1049732307307031>
- Stroud, C. and Mpendukana, S. 2010. Multilingual signage: a multimodal approach to discourses of consumption in a South African township. *Social Semiotics*, 20(5): 469 – 493.
- Stroud, C., and Jegels, D. 2014. Semiotic landscapes and mobile narrations of place: Performing the local. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 2014(228): 179 - 199.
- Stroud, C., Peck, A. and Williams, Q. 2019. Introduction: Visceral landscapes (the inside story). *Sociolinguistic Studies*, 13(1): 7-14.
- Strydom, P. 2011. *Contemporary Critical Theory and Methodology*. London: Routledge.
- Thaver, B & Thaver, L. 2010 *Structural Orientation and social agency in South Africa: state, race, higher education and transformation*. African Sociological Review 14(1) p48-46. 2010
- Todd, S. 2001. 'Bringing more than I contain': ethics, curriculum and the pedagogical demand for altered egos. *Curriculum studies*, 2001, vol. 33, no. 4, 431±450.  
 [Online]  
<http://mural.maynoothuniversity.ie/8540/1/Bringing%20more%20than%20I%20contain%20Ethics%20curriculum%20and%20the%20pedagogical%20demand%20for%20altered%20egos.pdf>
- Tuck, E & Yang, K.W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor in Decolonization: Indigeneity, *Education & Society*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2012, pp. 1-40. [Online]. Accessed March 2018]
- Van Leeuwen, T. 2005. *Introducing Social Semiotics*. London: Routledge.
- Vale, P. & Jacklin, H. (eds.). 2009. *Re-imagining the social in South Africa, Critique, theory, and post-apartheid society*. University of KwaZulu-Natal Press. [Online]
- Yoshiara, Y. (2008). Art museums and society after apartheid. *Museum management and curatorship*, 281-293.

News articles:

*11 musicians bring African Rhythm to Stellenbosch*. 2017, viewed October 2019.  
<https://www.bolanderlifestyle.co.za/news/11-musicians-bring-african-rhythm-to-stellenbosch>

O' Toole, S. *Visual Arts Wrap: National Arts Festival 2015 by Sean O'Toole*. 2015, viewed January 2021.  
<https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:UVSs2VLZkSgJ:https://artafricamagazine.org/visual-arts-wrap-national-arts-festival-2015-sean-o-toole/+&cd=19&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=tw>

*Drukkuns by gus-gevier*. 2017. Viewed November 2019  
<https://www.netwerk24.com/ZA/Eikestadnuus/Vermaak/drukkuns-by-gus-gevier-20171011-2>

Oosthuysend, O.O [ed]. 1969. *Die Universiteit se Kunsrnuseum*. Matieland, 1969. No1. April 1969